



RAM SHASTRI

CRUSADER FOR JUSTICE AND TRUTH

Vol 698





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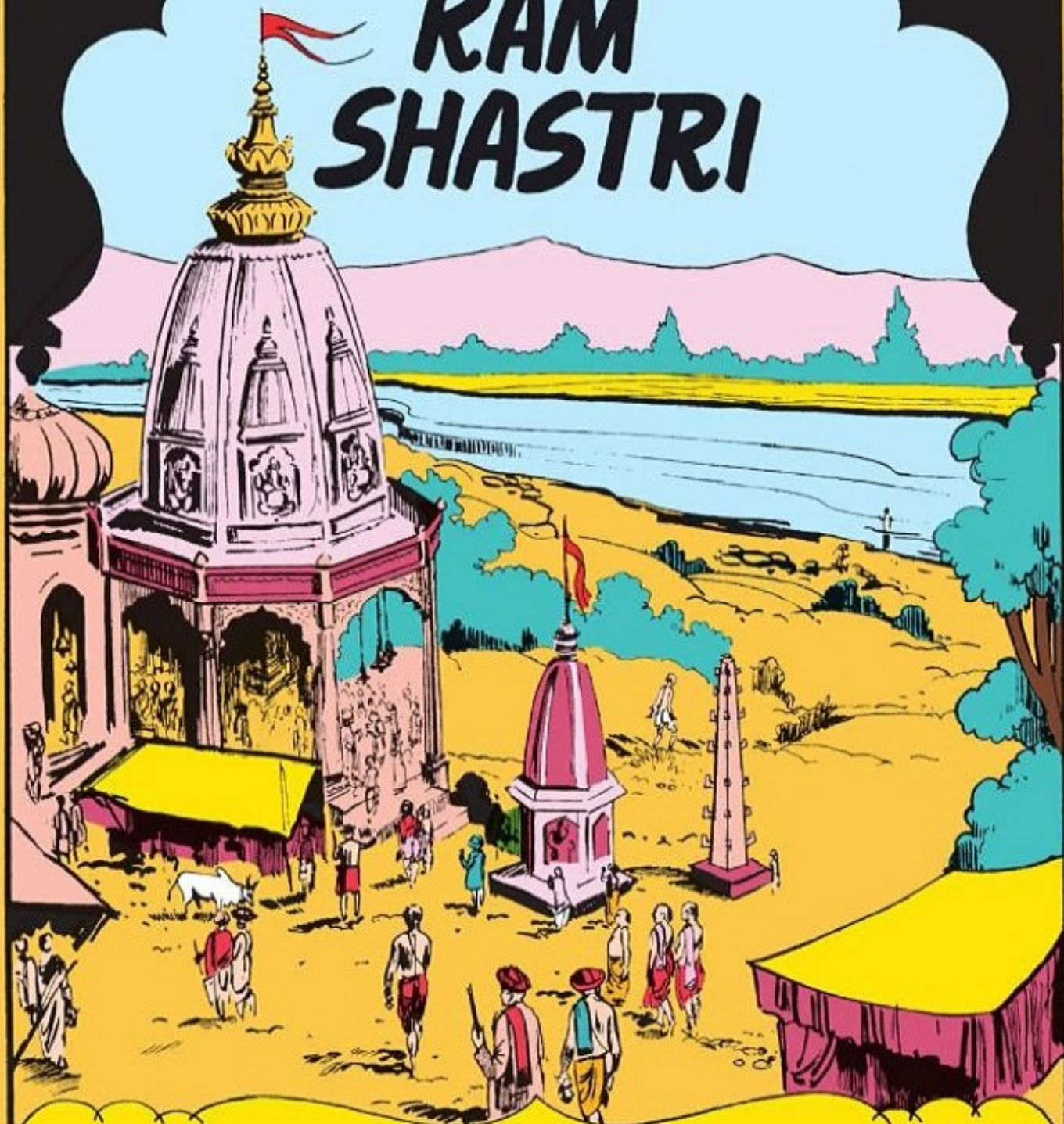
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RAM SHASTRI



THE ANNUAL TEMPLE FESTIVAL WAS IN FULL SWING AT MAHULI KSHETRA IN SATARA DISTRICT, WHERE RAM SHASTRI SPENT HIS EARLY CHILDHOOD. AFTER THE PUJA, DONATIONS WOULD BE GIVEN TO ALL QUALIFIED BRAHMAN STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS PRESENT.

AS THE NOTES OF THE CHANTS ROSE INTO THE AIR—

RAMYA! RAMYA—A!

RAMI WAS FROLICKING IN THE WATER AND TEASING HIS MORE SERIOUS PLAYMATES.

YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME WITH THOSE HYMNS. GET BACK INTO THE WATER. LET'S HAVE A RACE.

RAMYA! CAN'T YOU HEAR ME? COME OUT IMMEDIATELY AND DRY YOURSELF.

RAMYA CLAMBERED ONTO THE BANK.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, UNCLE? HAS ANYTHING HAPPENED?

THE DONATIONS FOR THE BRAHMANNS ARE ON. RUN ALONG. GET WHAT YOU CAN.

BUT UNCLE, I AM NEITHER A STUDENT NOR A SCHOLAR.

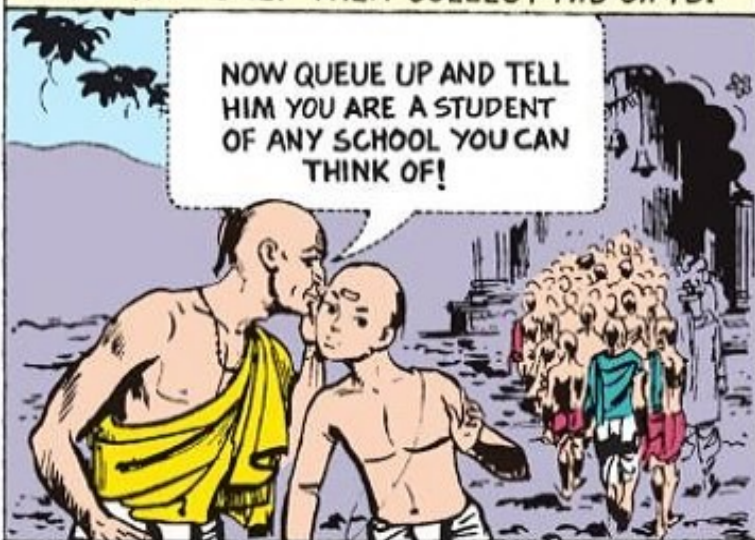
DON'T ARGUE. DO AS I SAY. AFTER ALL I FEED AND CLOTHE YOU.

RAM OBEDIENTLY FOLLOWED HIS UNCLE. BUT—

I WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY DONATION! I WILL NOT...

EACH BRAHMAN HAD TO DECLARE HIS CREDENTIALS AND ONLY THEN COLLECT HIS GIFTS.

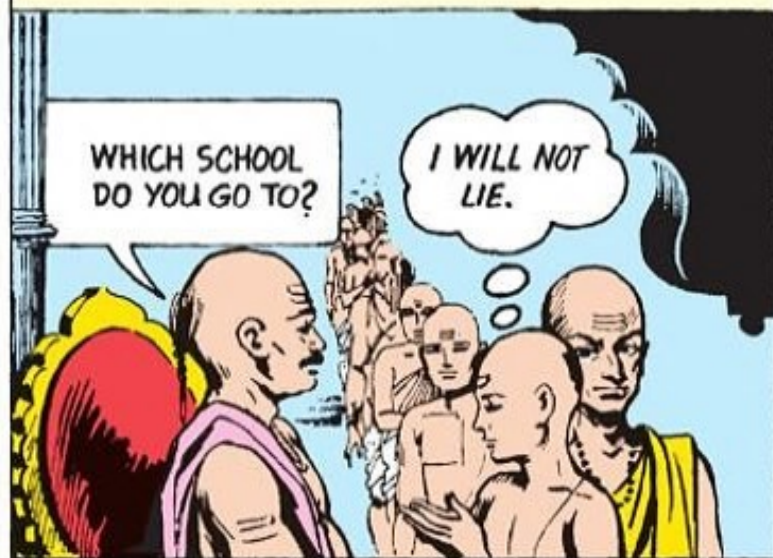
NOW QUEUE UP AND TELL HIM YOU ARE A STUDENT OF ANY SCHOOL YOU CAN THINK OF!



WHEN IT WAS RAM'S TURN—

WHICH SCHOOL DO YOU GO TO?

I WILL NOT LIE.



RAM HUNG HIS HEAD IN SHAME, REFUSING TO LIE.

HE IS DEAF, SIR!

AH—WELL—
HERE IS YOUR SHARE.



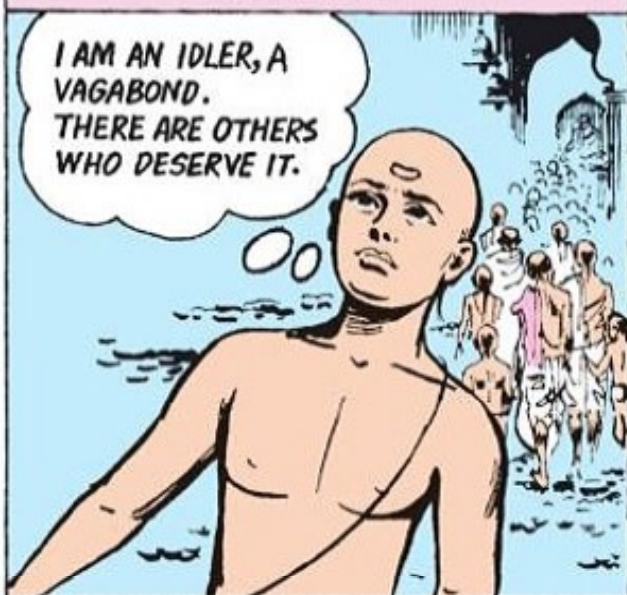
RAM TOOK THE MONEY MECHANICALLY AND WALKED AWAY, UTTERLY MISERABLE.

I HAVE NO RIGHT...

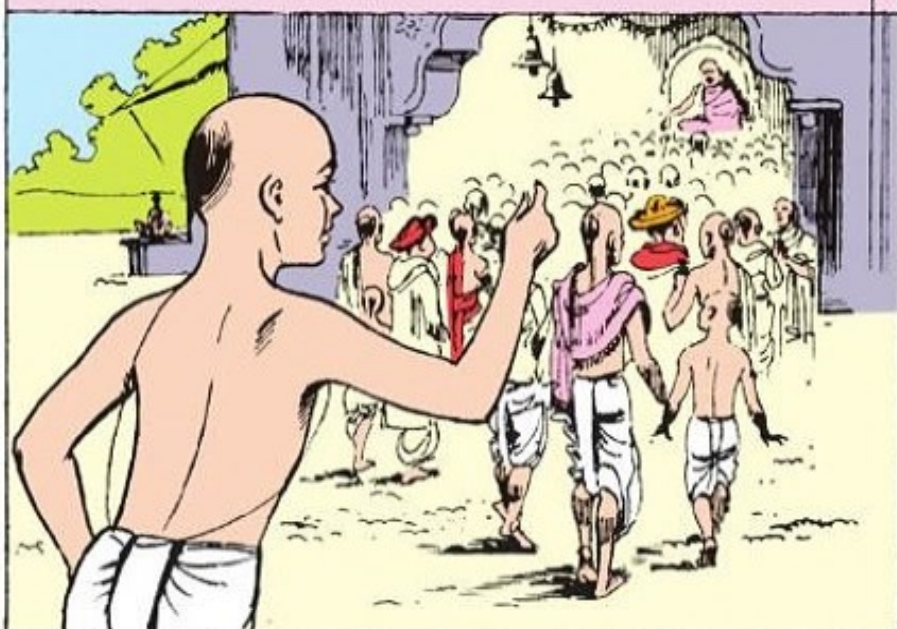


HE HAD NOT COVERED MUCH DISTANCE.
THE GUILT OF FALSEHOOD WEIGHED
UPON HIM.

I AM AN IDLER, A
VAGABOND.
THERE ARE OTHERS
WHO DESERVE IT.



TURNING ON HIS TRACKS, HE PUSHED HIS WAY
THROUGH THE CROWDS...



... AND STOOD BEFORE THE SHASTRI.

PLEASE TAKE THIS
BACK. I AM NO SCHOLAR.
I HAVE NO RIGHT TO IT.

AS HE MADE HIS WAY OUT OF THE CROWDS,
HIS UNCLE FOLLOWED HIM.

I FORBID YOU TO ENTER
MY HOME. YOU ARE YOUR
OWN MASTER. I WASH MY
HANDS OFF YOU.

RAM WAS COMPLETELY AT PEACE WITH HIMSELF
AND UTTERLY CONFIDENT.

LET MY FEET LEAD
ME WHERE THEY
WILL.

HE WALKED HAPPILY ON AND REACHED SATARA. THEN
SUDDENLY ROUND A BEND IN THE ROAD—

AH! A MANSION.
PERHAPS I MIGHT
GET A JOB THERE.

AT THAT MOMENT A PUJARI CAME OUT.

WHO LIVES
HERE?

ANAGAL SAHEB.
WHAT DO YOU
WANT?

I NEED A JOB.
DO YOU THINK
HE WOULD EMPLOY
ME?

COME WITH ME.
I HAVE FINISHED MY
DAILY PUJA. I AM
FREE.

AND THE PUJARI LED RAM TO ANAGAL SAHEB.

THERE IS ANAGAL SAHEB.
PAY YOUR RESPECTS TO HIM.
HE IS A KIND MAN. IF YOU ARE
LUCKY YOU WILL GET WHAT
YOU WANT.

WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DO YOU
COME FROM? WHAT DO YOU
WANT?

I AM A POOR
BRAHMAN LAD
FROM MAHULI, IN
NEED OF A JOB.

WE NEED A BRAHMAN
MENIAL. CAN YOU DO
THE WORK?

OH! YES! AND
GRATEFULLY!

YOU WILL HAVE TO WASH
CLOTHES, DRAW WATER,
RUN ERRANDS...

ANYTHING!
ANYTHING!

THEN YOU
MAY START
WORK TODAY.
AFTER A WEEK WE
WILL DECIDE WHAT
TO PAY YOU.

ANAGAL CALLED FOR THE CHIEF MENIAL.

TAKE HIM TO
YOUR MISTRESS
AND ASK HER TO
ASSIGN HIM HIS
DUTIES.

AND RAM'S ORDEALS BEGAN.

O RAMYA! HURRY!
HAVEN'T YOU FINISHED
THOSE DISHES? LOOK!
NO WATER IN THE
TUBS!

HE WAS OFTEN HUMILIATED.

SLOW COACH!
STILL AT YOUR FOOD?
WHO ARE YOU?
A SHASTRI'S SON?

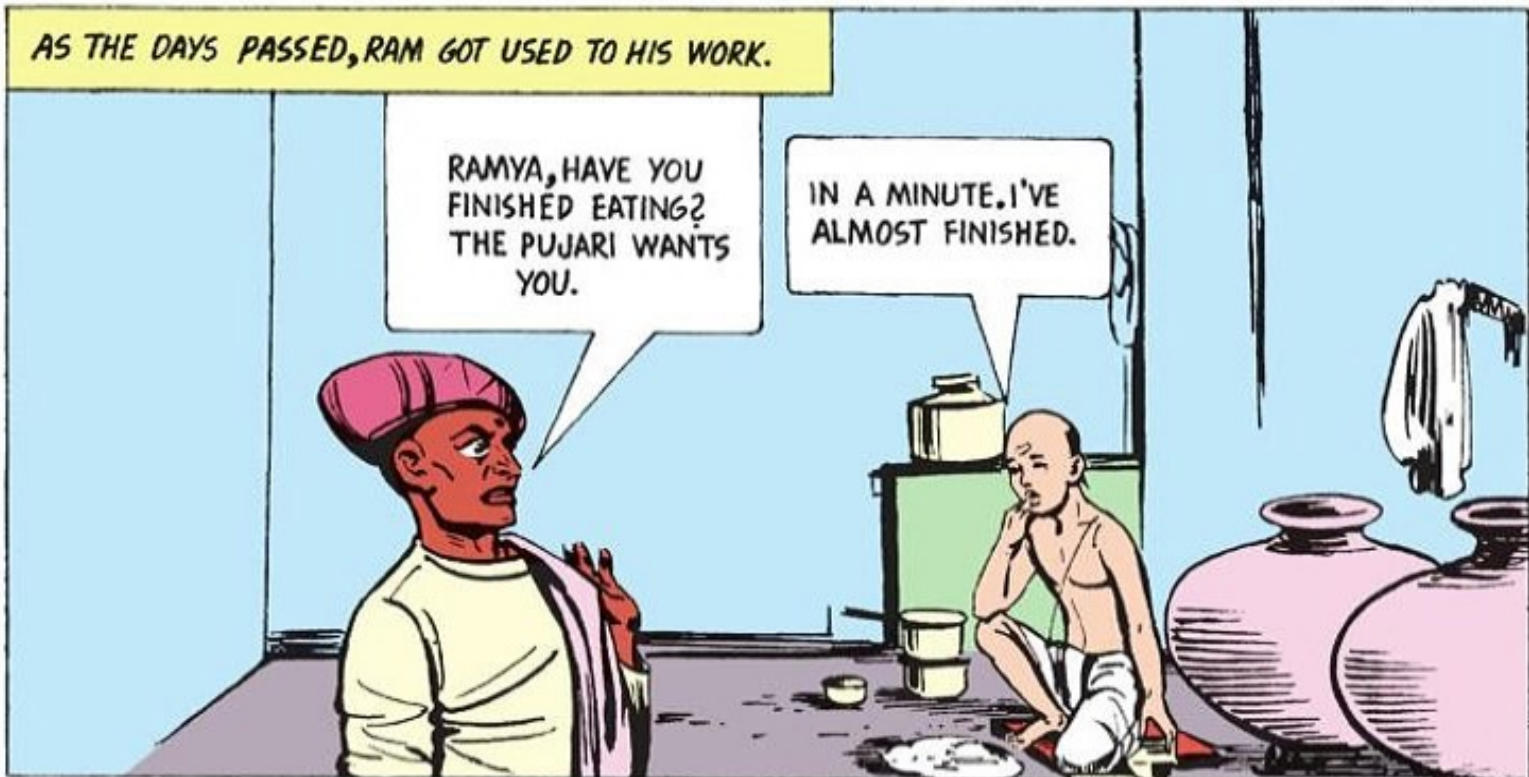
RAM OFTEN FELT LIKE GIVING UP HIS JOB. BUT...

I MUST NOT GIVE UP.
I MUST NOT GO
BEGGING TO MY
DISHONEST UNCLE.

AS THE DAYS PASSED, RAM GOT USED TO HIS WORK.

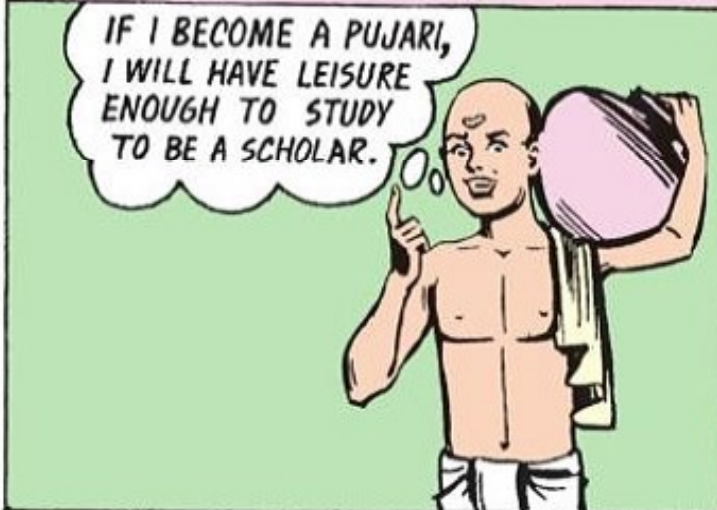
RAMYA, HAVE YOU FINISHED EATING? THE PUJARI WANTS YOU.

IN A MINUTE. I'VE ALMOST FINISHED.



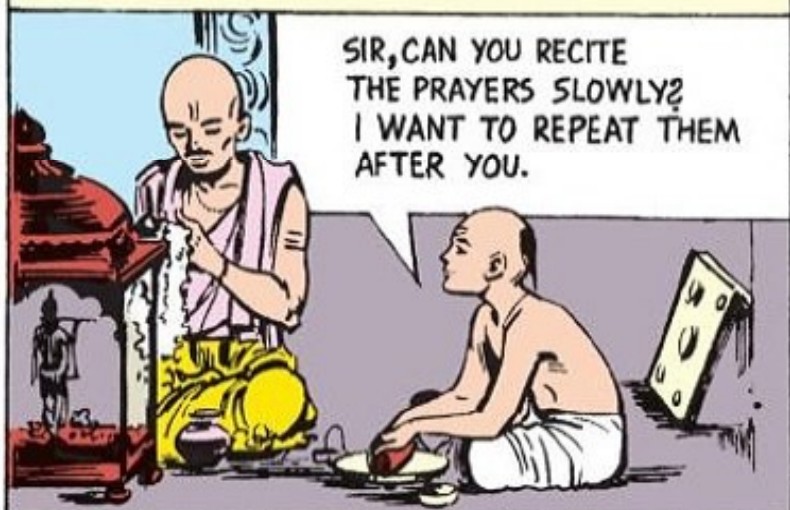
ONE DAY A THOUGHT SUDDENLY STRUCK HIM—

IF I BECOME A PUJARI, I WILL HAVE LEISURE ENOUGH TO STUDY TO BE A SCHOLAR.



THAT DAY AS HE WAS ASSISTING THE PUJARI—

SIR, CAN YOU RECITE THE PRAYERS SLOWLY? I WANT TO REPEAT THEM AFTER YOU.



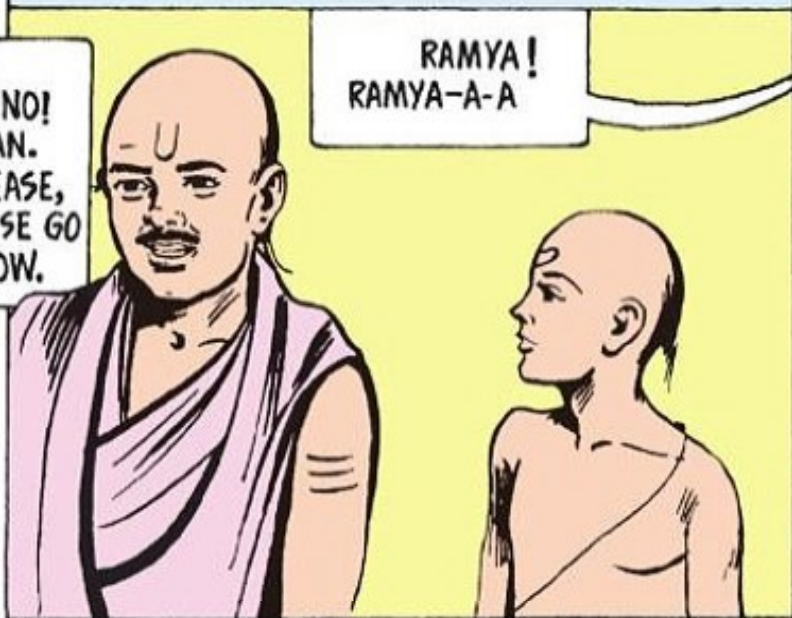
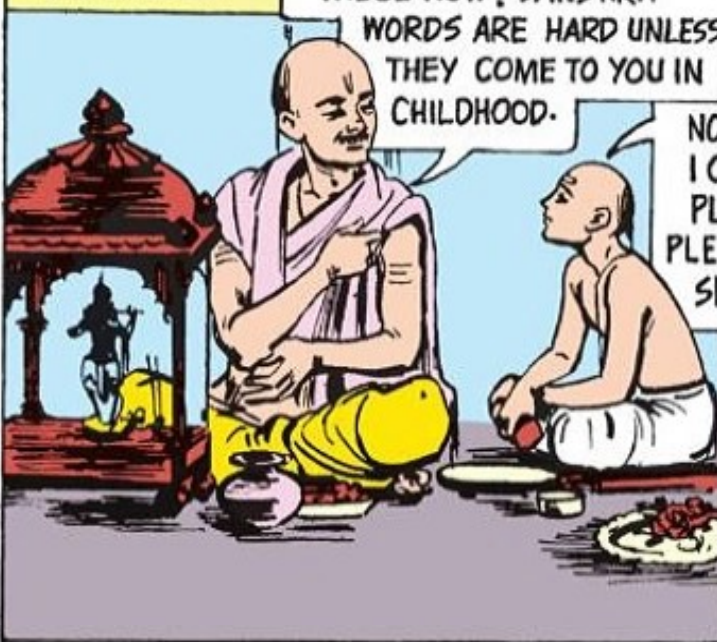
THE PUJARI WAS AMUSED.

RAM, HOW CAN YOU MOUTH THESE NOW? SANSKRIT WORDS ARE HARD UNLESS THEY COME TO YOU IN CHILDHOOD.

NO! NO! I CAN. PLEASE, PLEASE GO SLOW.

THE PUJARI SMILED AND BEGAN RECITING THE PRAYERS AT A SLOWER PACE. JUST THEN—

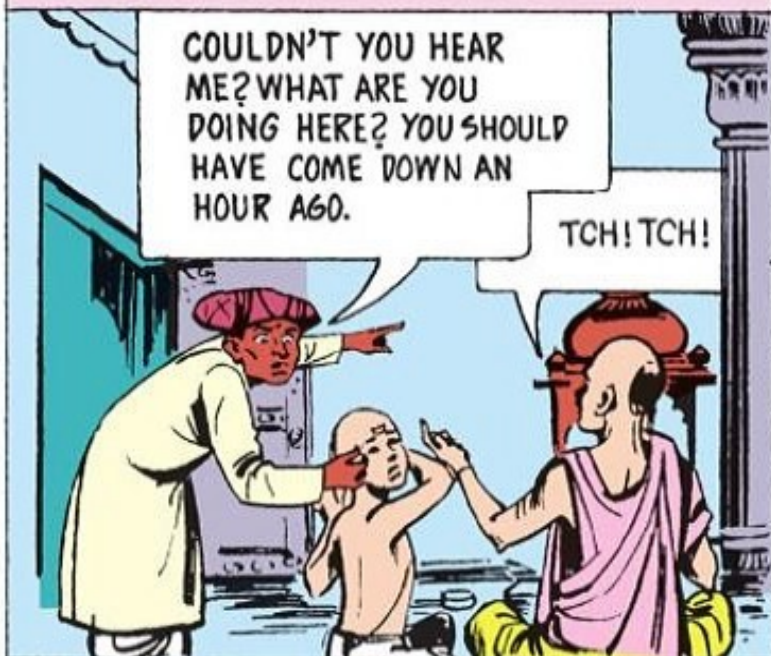
RAMYA! RAMYA-A-A



THE NEXT MOMENT THE CHIEF MENIAL CHARGED INTO THE ROOM.

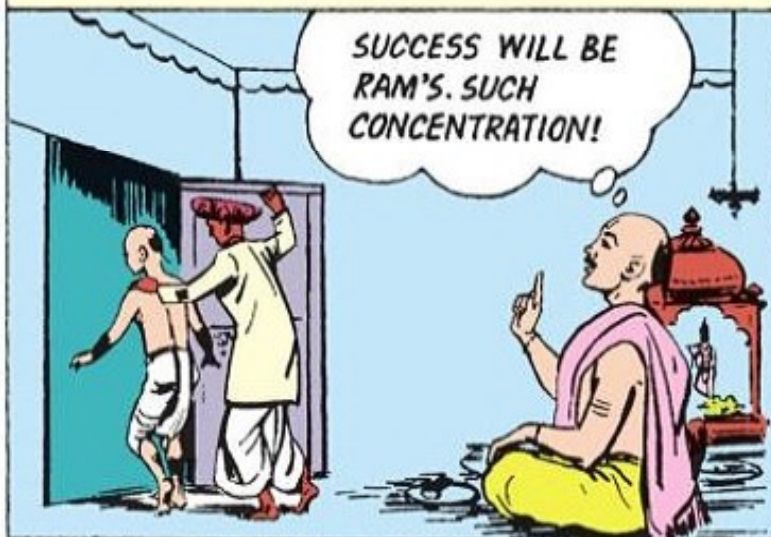
COULDN'T YOU HEAR ME? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOU SHOULD HAVE COME DOWN AN HOUR AGO.

TCH! TCH!



AND PUSHING RAM IN FRONT OF HIM, THE CHIEF MENIAL LEFT THE ROOM.

SUCCESS WILL BE RAM'S. SUCH CONCENTRATION!



ANAGAL SAHEB IS EXPECTED ANY MOMENT. WHERE IS THE WATER TO WASH HIS FEET?

GO, RAM! WE WILL CONTINUE TOMORROW.



RAM WAS READY WITH THE WATER WHEN ANAGAL ARRIVED.



ANAGAL PLACED HIS FEET ON THE PLATFORM.

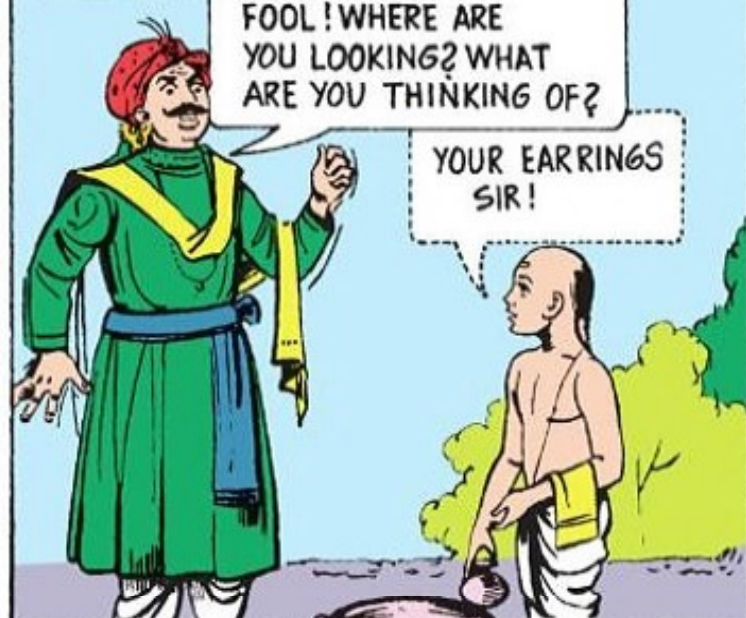
AH! IF I HAD SUCH A PEARL ON MY EAR...




ANAGAL WAS FURIOUS.

FOOL! WHERE ARE YOU LOOKING? WHAT ARE YOU THINKING OF?

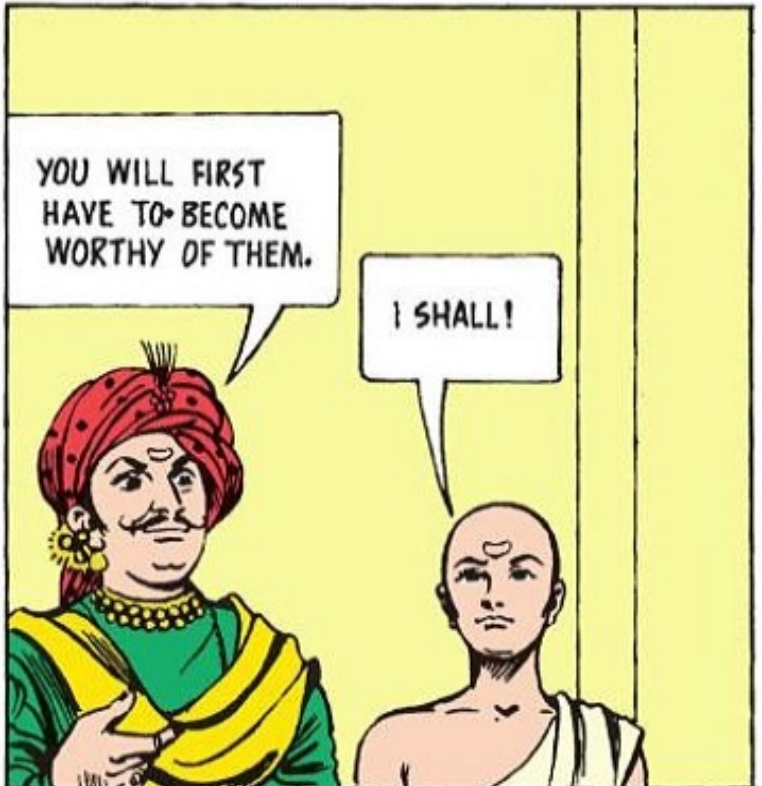
YOUR EARRINGS SIR!





WHY! DO YOU FEEL
LIKE WEARING
SUCH EARRINGS?

YES! SIR!



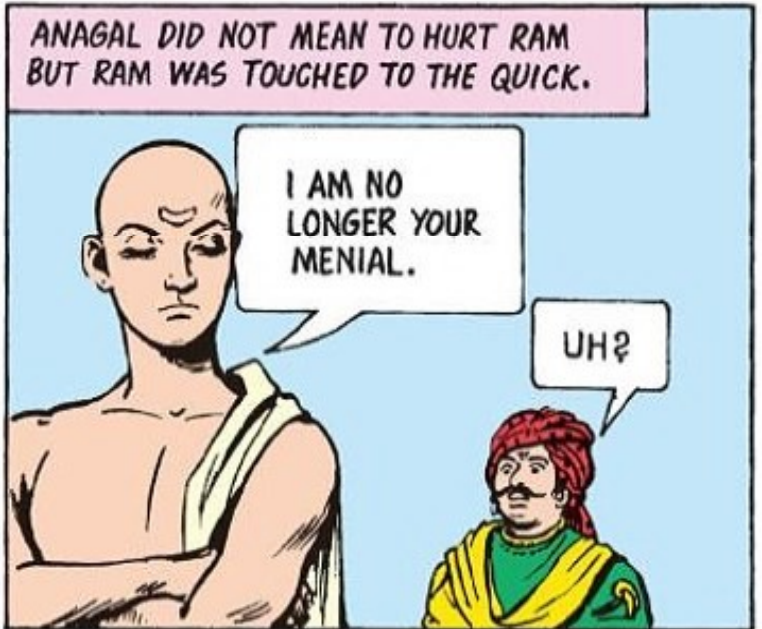
YOU WILL FIRST
HAVE TO BECOME
WORTHY OF THEM.

I SHALL!



HA! HA! HA!
AS MY MENIAL?

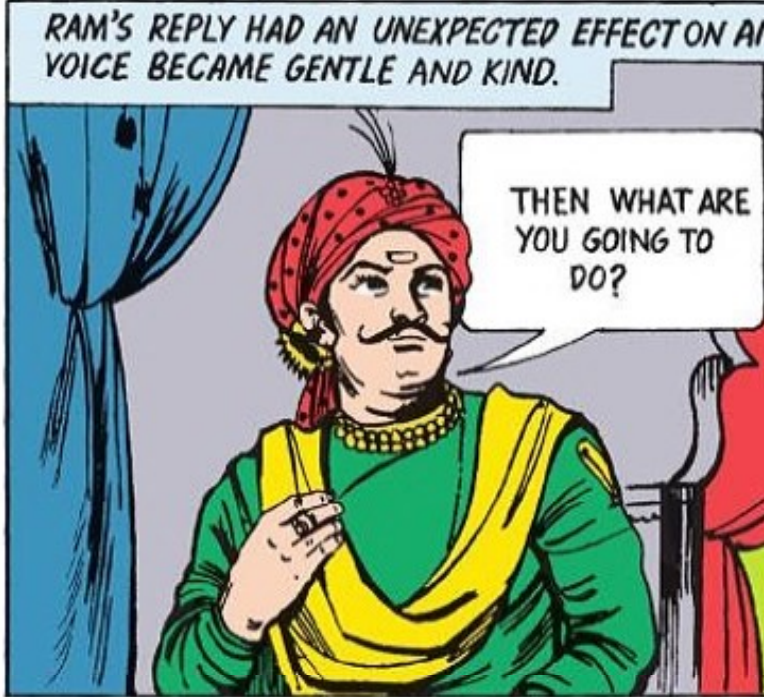
ANAGAL DID NOT MEAN TO HURT RAM
BUT RAM WAS TOUCHED TO THE QUICK.



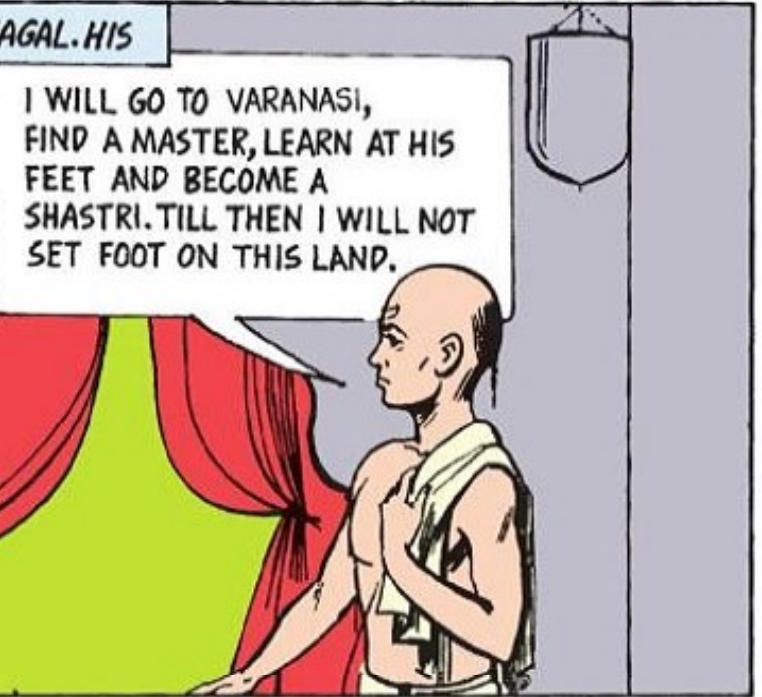
I AM NO
LONGER YOUR
MENIAL.

UH?

RAM'S REPLY HAD AN UNEXPECTED EFFECT ON ANAGAL. HIS
VOICE BECAME GENTLE AND KIND.



THEN WHAT ARE
YOU GOING TO
DO?



I WILL GO TO VARANASI,
FIND A MASTER, LEARN AT HIS
FEET AND BECOME A
SHASTRI. TILL THEN I WILL NOT
SET FOOT ON THIS LAND.

BEFORE ANAGAL COULD REPLY THE PUJARI CAME ON THE SCENE.

I AM CONFIDENT HE WILL.



AND THE PUJARI TOLD ANAGAL ABOUT RAM'S ATTEMPTS TO LEARN SHLOKAS AND HIS ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE.

ANAGAL REACHED INTO HIS CUMMERBUND AND PULLED OUT A BAG OF COINS.

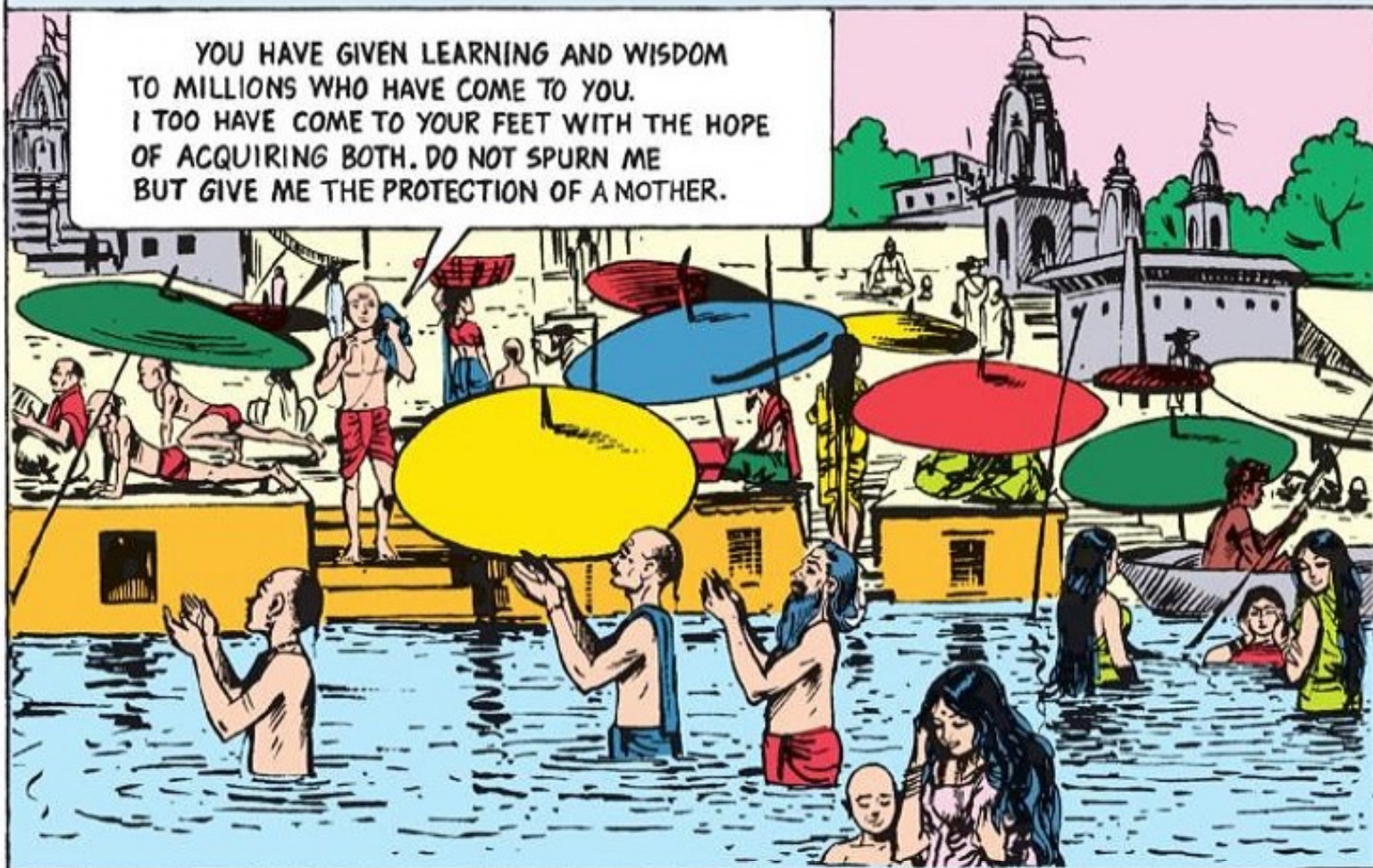
THIS BOY IS NO ORDINARY MENIAL!

HERE I TAKE THIS WITH MY BLESSINGS. MAY YOU SUCCEED IN YOUR AMBITION.

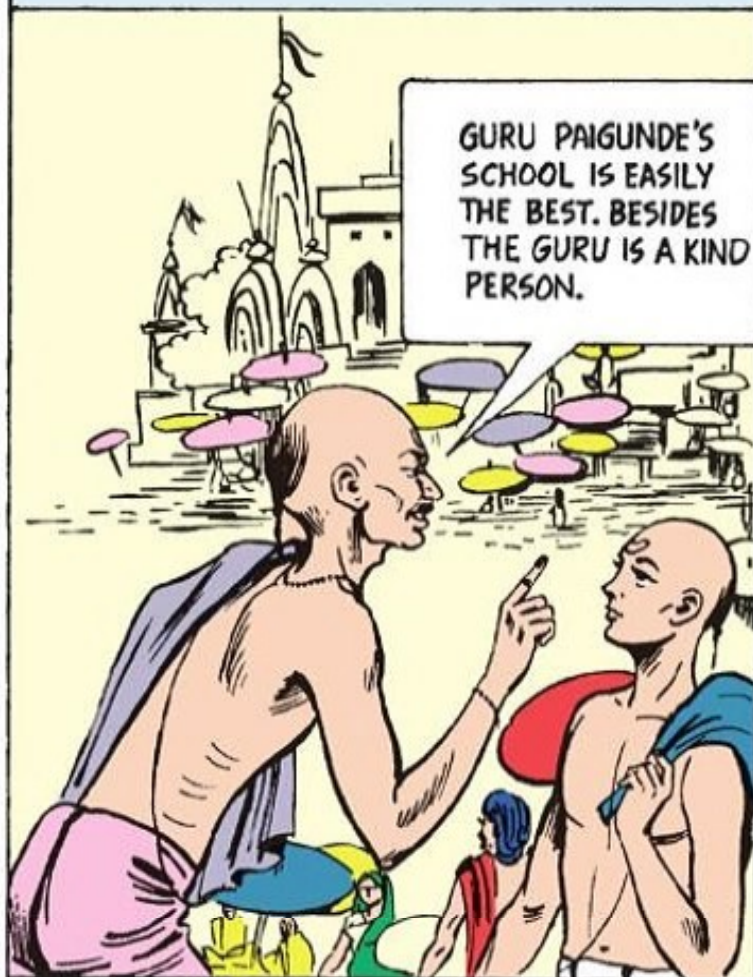


THE TREK TO VARANASI WAS A LONG AND ARDUOUS ONE FOR THE SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD RAM BUT HE FINALLY REACHED.

YOU HAVE GIVEN LEARNING AND WISDOM TO MILLIONS WHO HAVE COME TO YOU. I TOO HAVE COME TO YOUR FEET WITH THE HOPE OF ACQUIRING BOTH. DO NOT SPURN ME BUT GIVE ME THE PROTECTION OF A MOTHER.



HE WENT AROUND MAKING ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE BEST SCHOOLS.



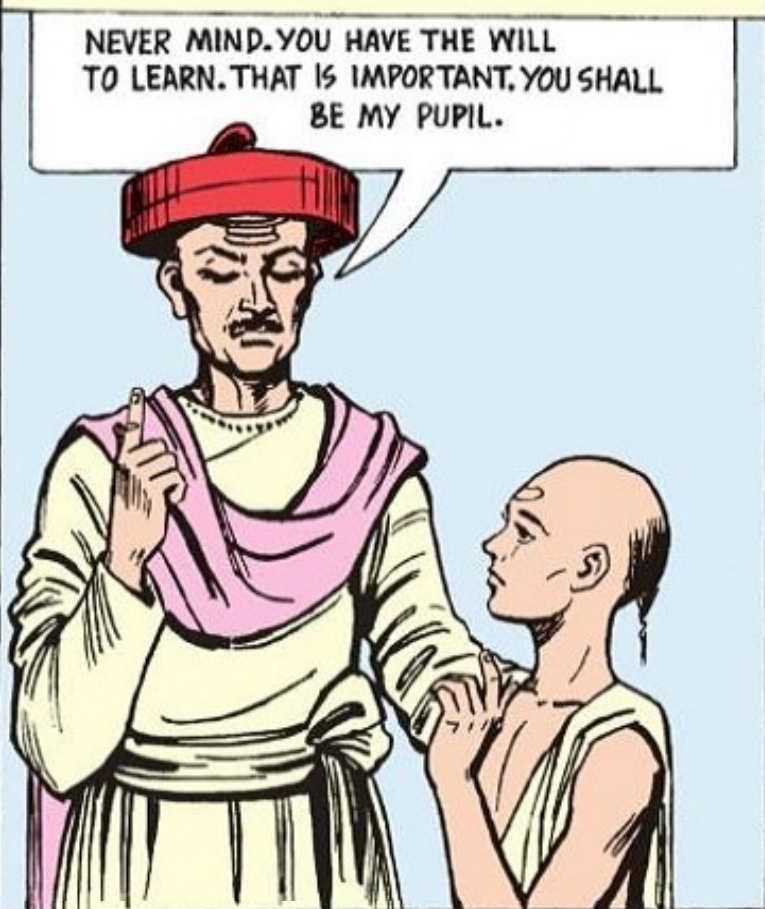
RAM WENT TO THE GURU.



RAM WAS ASHAMED.



THE GURU UNDERSTOOD THE SITUATION IMMEDIATELY.



I SHALL TEACH YOU FROM
THE VERY BEGINNING.
I SHALL TURN YOU INTO A
SCHOLAR.

YOU SHALL
HAVE NO
CAUSE FOR
REGRET, SIR.

RAM BEGAN HIS STUDIES. HE WAS A SINCERE
PUPIL AND THE GURU NEVER ONCE HAD TO
SCOLD HIM.

THAT'S WRONG.
REPEAT IT AFTER
ME.

HIS FELLOW STUDENTS OFTEN TEASED HIM BECAUSE HE WAS MUCH OLDER THAN MOST OF THEM.

SEE RAM! WE
TOO HAVE GROWN
MOUSTACHES.
HA! HA!

BUT RAM TOOK THE TEASING GOOD-HUMOUREDLY AND
SOON BECAME A FAVOURITE. ONE DAY—

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING,
RAM?

REPEATING MY SHLOKAS, AS
MANY TIMES AS THE GRAINS
OF WHEAT HERE. THAT IS THE
ONLY WAY TO MASTER
SANSKRIT AT MY AGE.

TWELVE YEARS PASSED IN THIS MANNER
AND RAM EMERGED A MASTER IN THE VEDAS,
VEDANGAS AND SHASTRAS.



THEN ONE DAY—

RAM, TOMORROW
YOU SHALL BE
ORDAINED A SHASTRI,
AND WILL BE FREE TO
LEAVE THE SCHOOL.



THE NEXT DAY—


SIR, YOU MADE
ME WHAT I AM
TODAY. WHAT
DAKSHINA CAN I
OFFER YOU?

DON'T SELL YOUR KNOWLEDGE.
THAT IS THE GREATEST DAKSHINA
YOU COULD OFFER ME. LET JUSTICE,
THE KING AND SOCIETY BENEFIT
BY YOUR LEARNING.




AFTER THE CEREMONY WAS OVER RAM SHASTRI LEFT FOR
MAHULI KSHETRA DETERMINED TO REPAY HIS GURU TO THE LAST.

AS SOON AS RAM SHASTRI ARRIVED AT MAHULI KSHETRA, PESHWA MADHAV RAO SENT FOR HIM.



RAM SHASTRI, THE RENOWNED SANSKRIT SCHOLAR, HAS RETURNED TO MAHULI. INVITE HIM TO THE COURT.

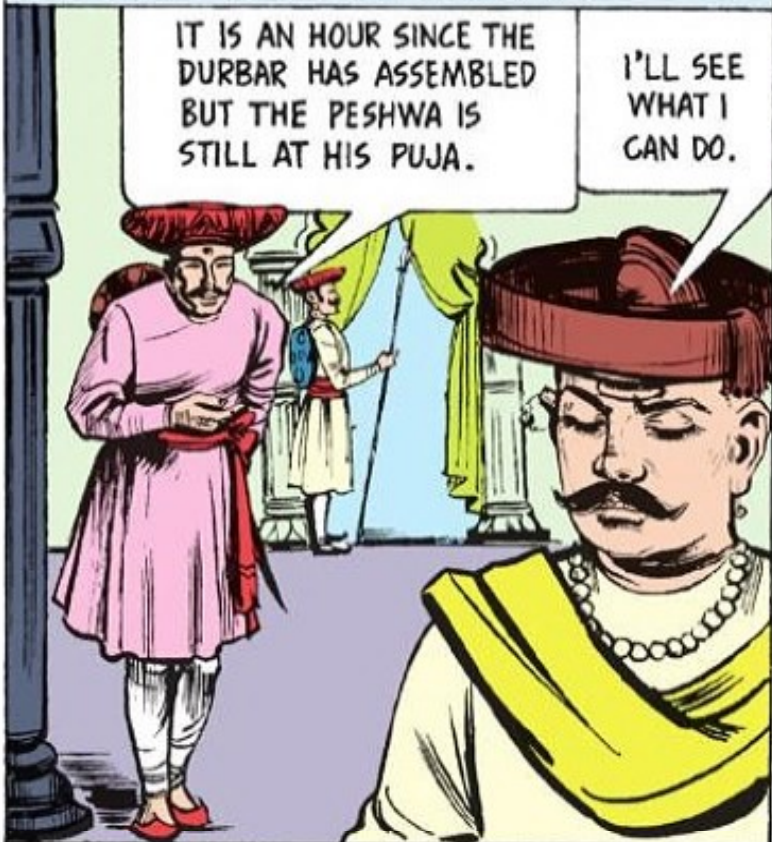
WHEN RAM SHASTRI CAME TO THE COURT AT POONA—



I WISH TO APPOINT YOU AS A JUDGE IN MY COURT.

MY LORD, I AM HONoured!

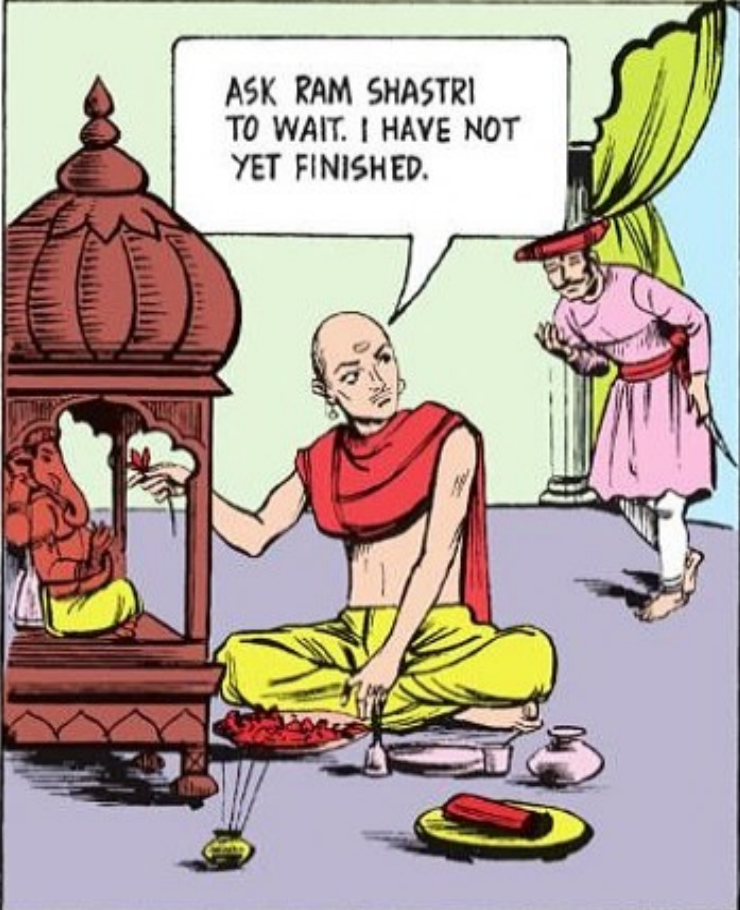
MADHAV RAO WAS A GOOD RULER. BUT A BRAHMAN BY BIRTH, HE SPENT FAR TOO MUCH TIME ON RELIGIOUS RITUALS, OFTEN IN PREFERENCE TO HIS STATE DUTIES.



IT IS AN HOUR SINCE THE DURBAR HAS ASSEMBLED BUT THE PESHWA IS STILL AT HIS PUJA.

I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

RAM SHASTRI SENT A MESSAGE TO THE PESHWA. BUT—



ASK RAM SHASTRI TO WAIT. I HAVE NOT YET FINISHED.

WHEN THE MESSENGER RETURNED
UNSUCCESSFUL —

THE RULER NEGLECTS
HIS DUTIES. BUT HOW
CAN I LET HIM KNOW
WITHOUT OFFENDING
HIM?

THEN HE HAD AN IDEA. AS SOON AS THE PESHWA
EMERGED FROM THE PUJA ROOM —

I AM RESIGNING,
MY LORD. I AM
LEAVING FOR
KASHI.

WHATEVER
FOR?

MY DUTIES AS A
BRAHMAN GO ILL
WITH MY DUTIES
AS A JUDGE. SO I HAVE
DECIDED TO GIVE UP ONE
OF THEM.

THE PESHWA IMMEDIATELY UNDERSTOOD.

YOU ARE A WISE MAN,
INDEED. MATTERS OF
STATE SHOULD COME FIRST.
LET US GO AND MEET
THE COURT.

MADHAV RAO'S CONFIDENCE IN RAM SHASTRI STEADILY GREW. WHEN THE CHIEF JUSTICE DIED, RAM SHASTRI WAS GIVEN THE APPOINTMENT.

A FEW MONTHS LATER—

IT IS THE HARVEST SEASON. I SHALL VISIT MAHULI FOR A FEW DAYS.



AS HIS PALANQUIN NEARED MAHULI KSHETRA—

MY PLOUGH!
HELP! MY BULLOCKS!

O SPARE MY ONLY SON.
I AM A WIDOW. WHO WILL
LOOK AFTER THE FIELDS?

RAM SHASTRI STEPPED OUT OF HIS PALANQUIN.

WHAT IS THE
MATTER? WHAT IS
ALL THE COMMOTION
ABOUT?

THE PESHWA'S SOLDIERS
ARE LAYING WASTE OUR
FIELDS—THEY ARE TAKING
AWAY THE YOUNG MEN.



RAM SHASTRI GLANCED TOWARDS THE FIELDS.

COME ON!

I WON'T.

THEN I'LL HAVE
TO TAKE YOU BY
FORCE!



RAM SHASTRI WAS FURIOUS.

QUICK! FOLLOW ME!



STOP! WHAT
ARE YOU UP TO?
LEAVE HIM ALONE.



WE ARE UP TO NOTHING.
THE PESHWA NEEDS FIFTY
LABOURERS URGENTLY. WE
ARE COLLECTING THEM.

RELEASE THE FARMERS. I WILL
TALK TO THE PESHWA.

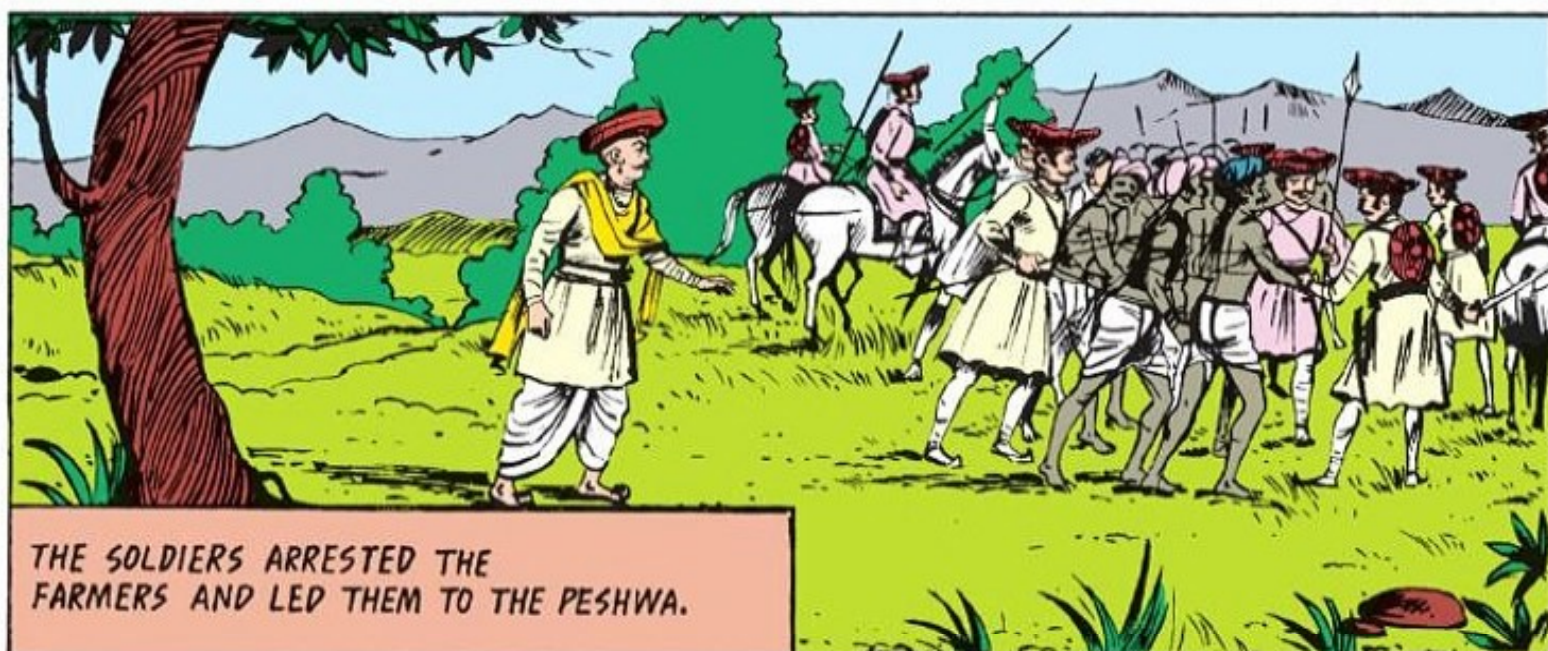
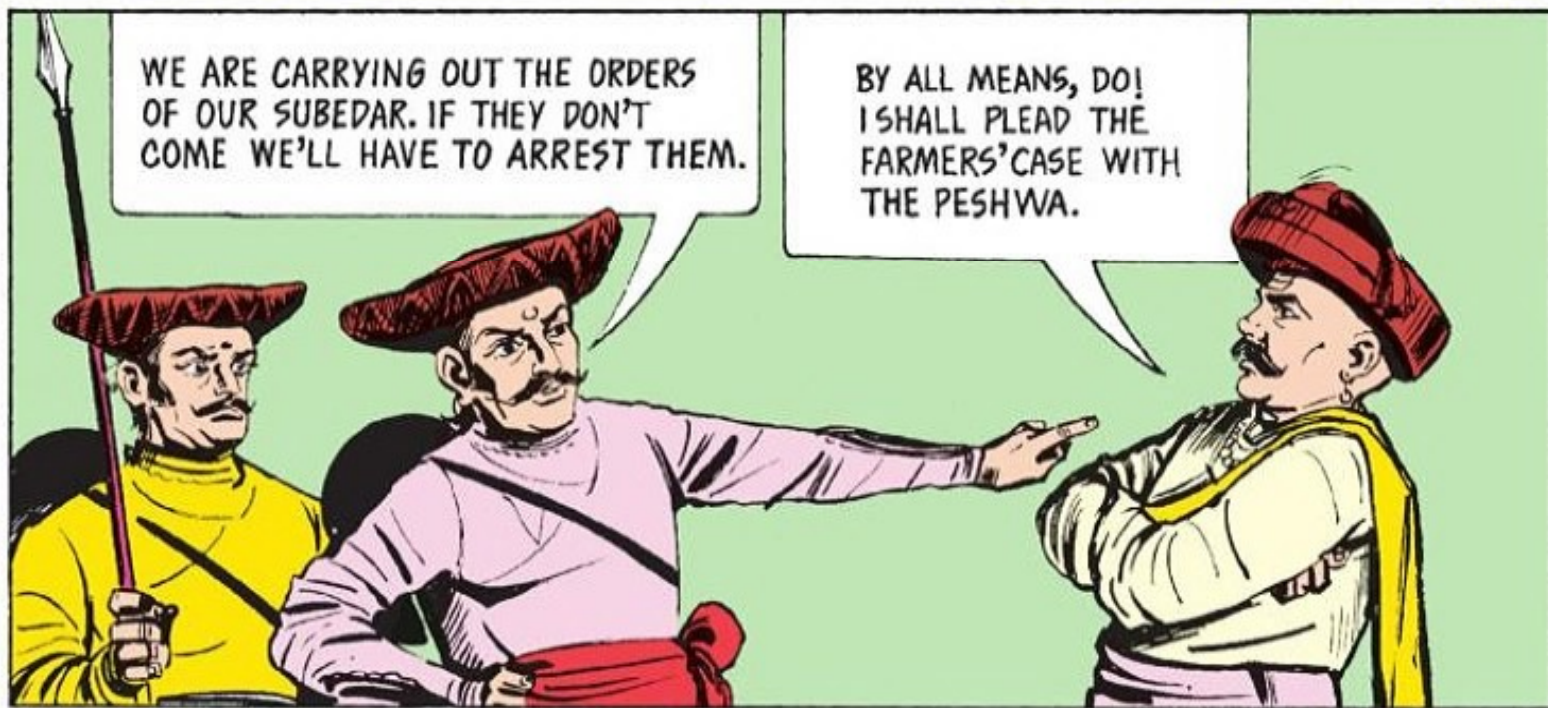


THE FARMERS, CONFIDENT OF RAM SHASTRI'S PROTECTION, REFUSED TO MOVE.

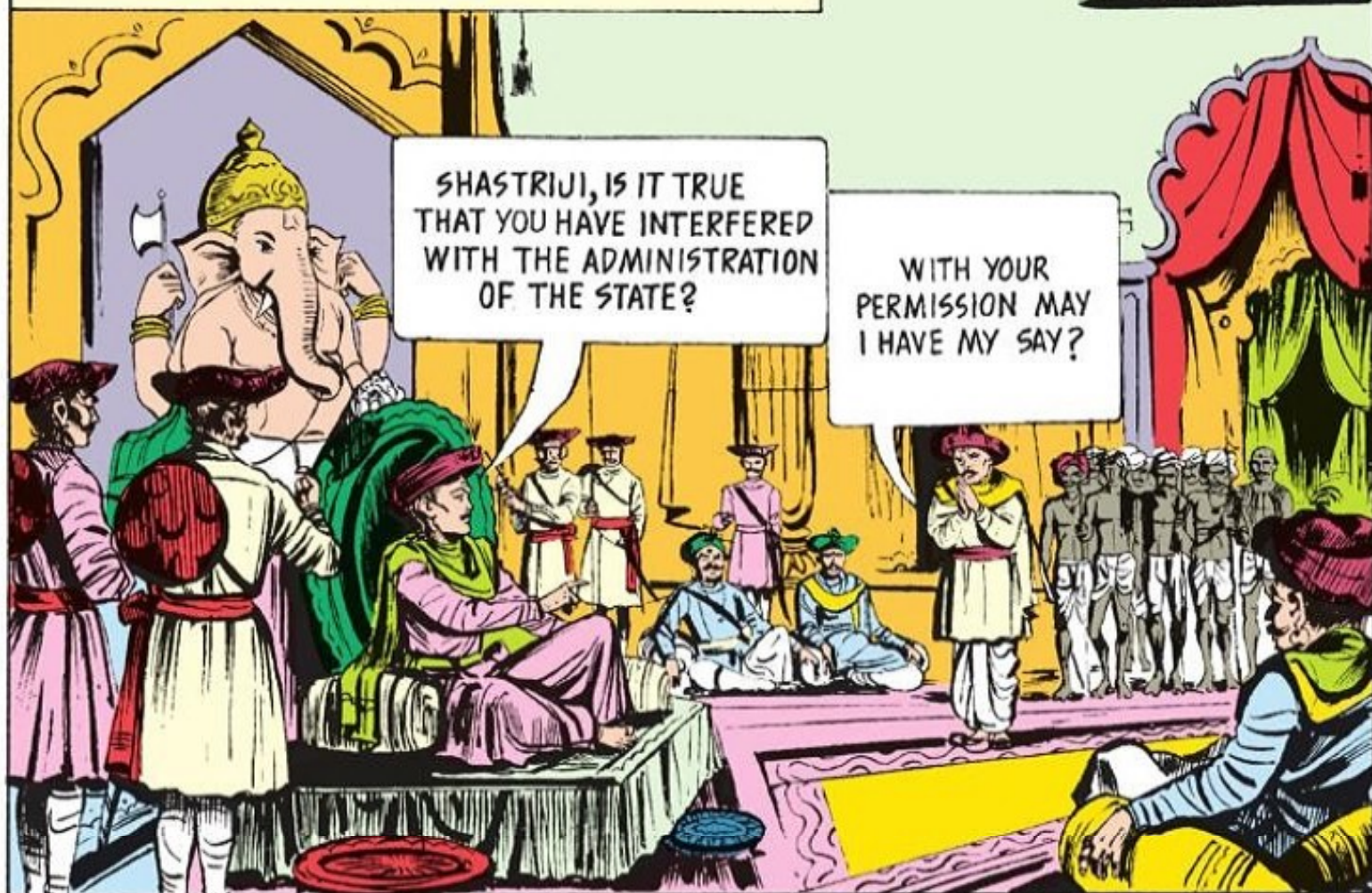


WE ARE CARRYING OUT THE ORDERS OF OUR SUBEDAR. IF THEY DON'T COME WE'LL HAVE TO ARREST THEM.

BY ALL MEANS, DO! I SHALL PLEAD THE FARMERS' CASE WITH THE PESHWA.



THE PESHWA WAS SURPRISED WHEN HE HEARD THE CHARGES AGAINST RAM SHASTRI.



SHASTRIJI, IS IT TRUE THAT YOU HAVE INTERFERED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE?

WITH YOUR PERMISSION MAY I HAVE MY SAY?

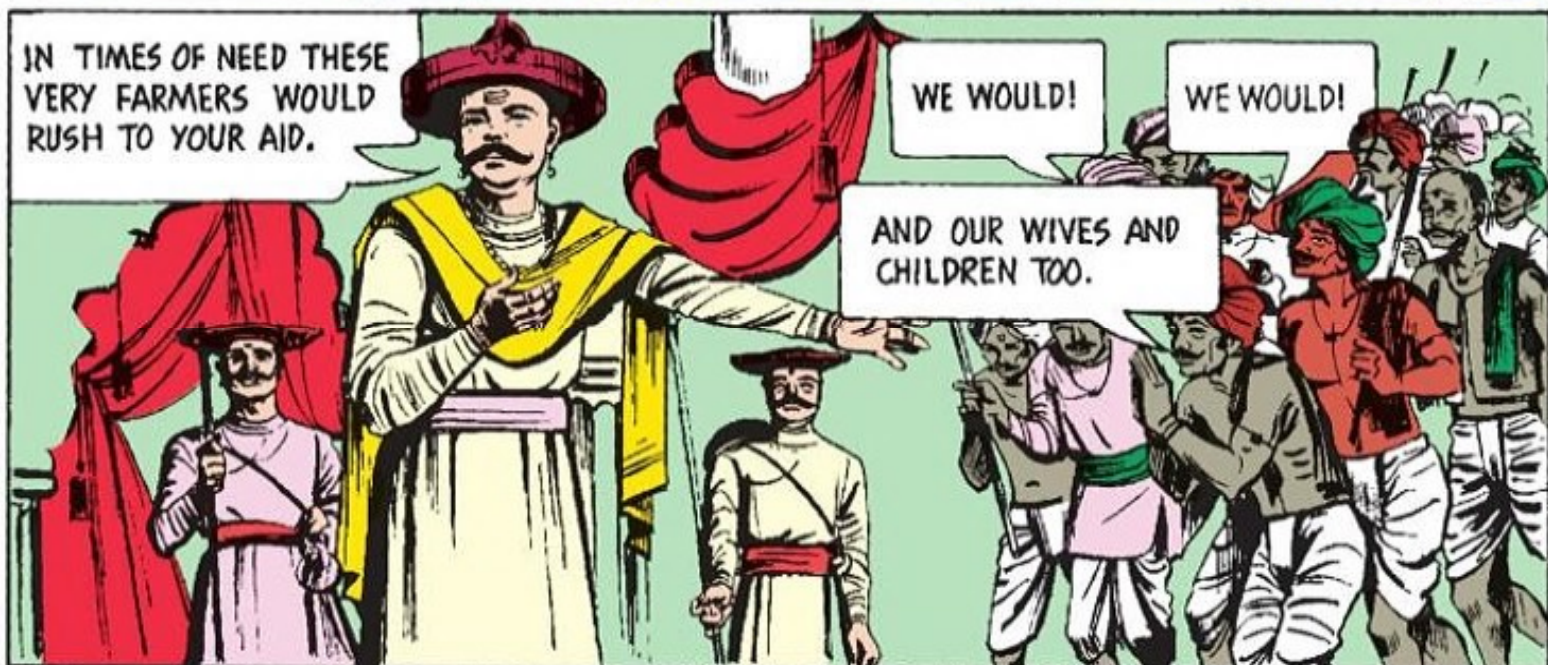


YOU HAVE MY PERMISSION.

IT IS NEARING HARVEST TIME. IF THE FARMERS ARE AWAY THE LAND WILL LIE FALLOW. FAMINE WILL STRIKE AND THE RULER WILL HAVE FAILED IN HIS DUTY.



YOU HAVE A RIGHT OVER EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOUR SUBJECTS. BUT THERE ARE PRIORITIES.



IN TIMES OF NEED THESE VERY FARMERS WOULD RUSH TO YOUR AID.

WE WOULD!

WE WOULD!

AND OUR WIVES AND CHILDREN TOO.



I SEE YOUR POINT. FORCED LABOUR WILL BE BANNED HENCEFORTH IN OUR STATE.

THE PESHWA PARDONED THE FARMERS AND SENT THEM BACK TO THEIR FIELDS. RAM SHASTRI'S NAME BECAME A BYWORD FOR JUSTICE AND HIS FAME SPREAD OVER THE ENTIRE MARATHA KINGDOM.

ONE DAY MADHAV RAO'S DECLINING HEALTH TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE. HIS BROTHER NARAYAN RAO AND RAM SHASTRI WERE AT HIS BEDSIDE.

MY END IS NEAR. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE RAGHOBHA.

I SHALL SEND FOR HIM.



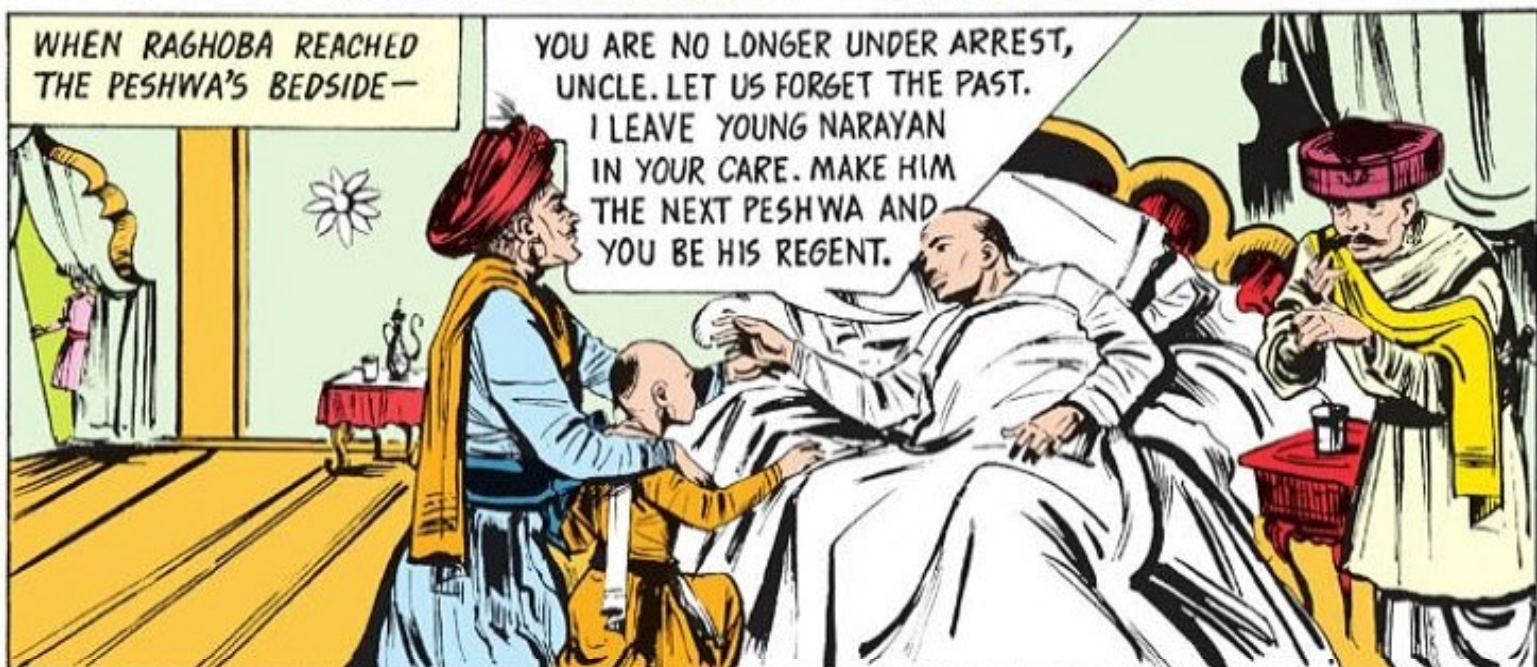
RAGHOBHA, ALSO KNOWN AS RAGHUNATH RAO, WAS THE PESHWA'S UNCLE. MADHAV RAO HAD TO PLACE HIM UNDER HOUSE ARREST BECAUSE HE AND HIS AMBITIOUS WIFE ANANDI WERE FOREVER PLOTTING AGAINST HIM.

THE PESHWA WANTS TO SEE YOU!



WHEN RAGHOBHA REACHED THE PESHWA'S BEDSIDE—

YOU ARE NO LONGER UNDER ARREST, UNCLE. LET US FORGET THE PAST. I LEAVE YOUNG NARAYAN IN YOUR CARE. MAKE HIM THE NEXT PESHWA AND YOU BE HIS REGENT.



RAGHOBA WAS DELIGHTED. HE CAME BACK TO ANANDI, JUBILANT.

I HAVE GOOD NEWS! WE ARE FREE. MADHAV RAO IS ABOUT TO DIE. NARAYAN WILL BECOME THE TITULAR PESHWA AND ALL THE POWER— IN MY HANDS!



THE THRONE MAKES A PESHWA, NOT POWER. NOW YOU DO THE DIRTY WORK SO THAT NARAYAN CAN ENJOY THE THRONE.



A FEW DAYS LATER RAGHOBA CALLED ANANDIBAI TO HIM.

OH! DON'T WORRY. I HAVE MY OWN PLANS.



HERE! READ THIS AND YOU'LL UNDERSTAND ALL.



IT WAS TO ONE OF HIS SOLDIERS.

...AS AGREED BY US
YOU WILL KIDNAP
NARAYAN RAO. YOU
WILL BE PAID...

KIDNAP
INDEED!
KILL SHOULD
BE THE WORD.



THERE IS NO LIGHT
HERE. I'LL GO OUT
AND READ IT.



ANANDIBAI SOON RETURNED WITH
THE LETTER.

EXCELLENT! WHY DON'T
YOU PUT YOUR SEAL ON IT.
I CAN DISPATCH IT RIGHT
AWAY.



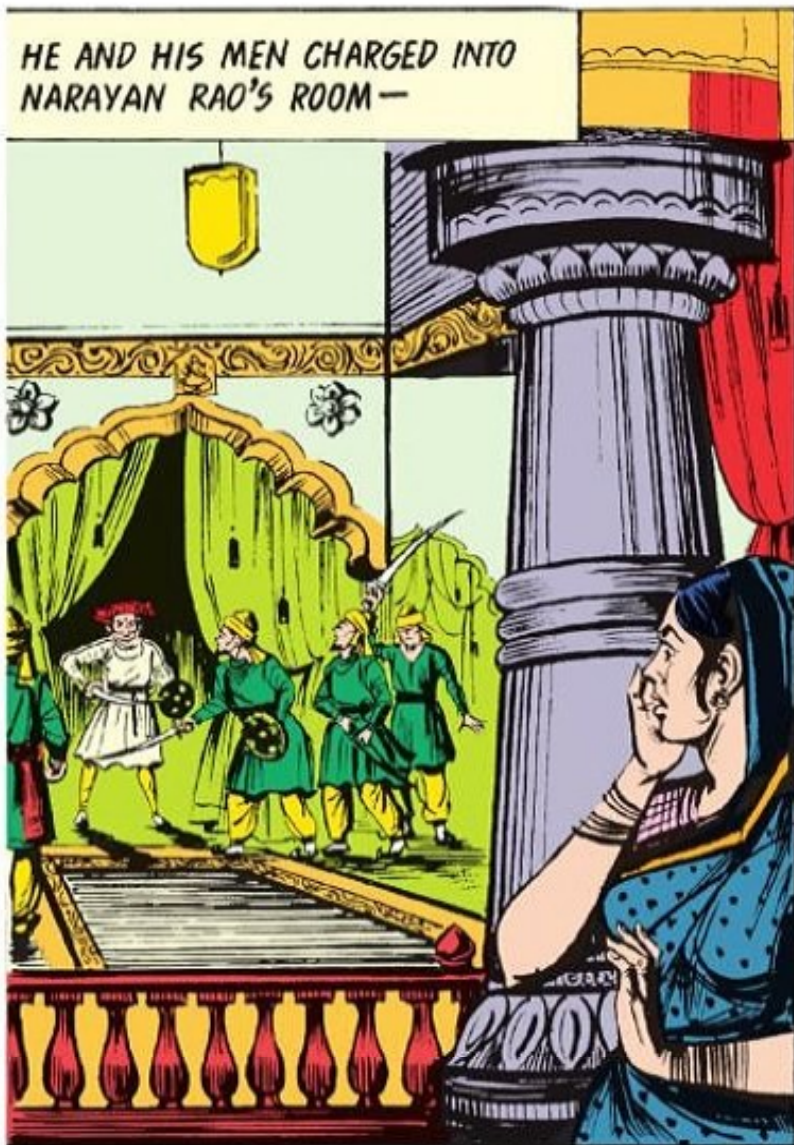
RAGHOBHA HAD NO IDEA THAT HE HAD
PUT HIS SEAL ON A DEATH WARRANT.

AS SOON AS RAGHOBHA'S SOLDIER
GOT THE LETTER—

RAGHOBHA HAD TALKED
OF KIDNAPPING...
HE SEEMS TO HAVE CHANGED
HIS MIND. WELL IT'S NONE
OF MY BUSINESS. COME MY
MEN, LET'S GO.



HE AND HIS MEN CHARGED INTO
NARAYAN RAO'S ROOM—



NARAYAN RAN TO RAGHOBHA.



RAGHOBHA WAS BEWILDERED, BUT
ANANDIBAI GLARED AT HIM,
FORBIDDING HIM TO MOVE.



WHEN RAM SHASTRI LEARNT OF THE MURDER OF NARAYAN RAO IN BROAD DAYLIGHT, HE WAS AGHAST. HE PACED UP AND DOWN HIS ROOM.



SUDDENLY A COMMOTION ON THE STREET DISTRACTED HIM. HE LOOKED OUT OF THE WINDOW. RAGHOBRA WAS GOING IN PROCESSION TO THE DURBAR.

WHAT'S THAT?



UTTERLY DISGUSTED BY THE SIGHT, HE TURNED ROUND...

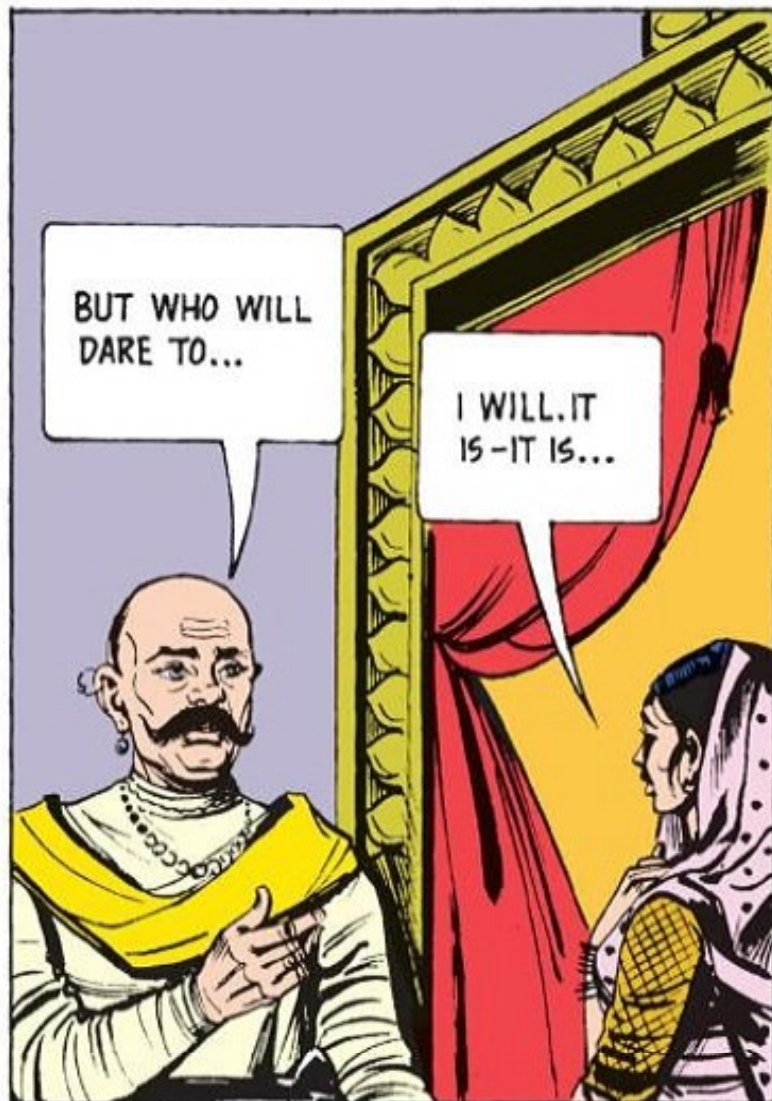


...TO FIND THE WIFE OF THE PESHWA'S BODYGUARD WAITING PATIENTLY FOR HIS ATTENTION.

YOU HERE?
WHAT DO
YOU WANT?

JUSTICE!





BUT WHO WILL
DARE TO...

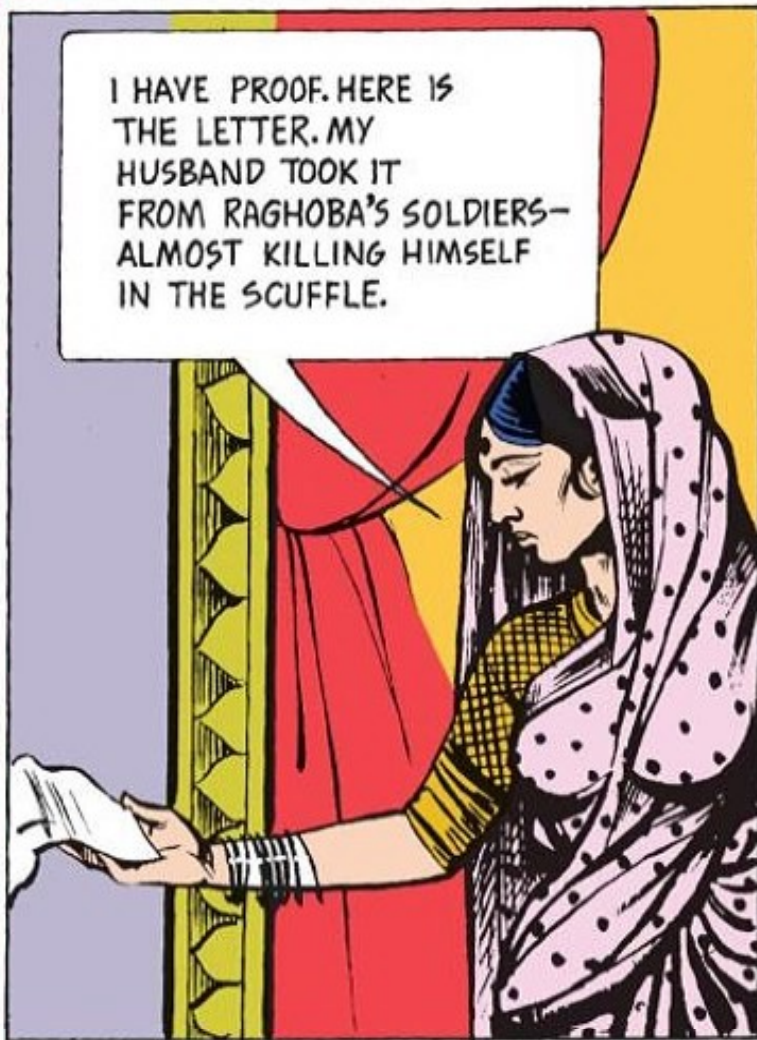
I WILL. IT
IS - IT IS...



... RAGHUNATH RAO !



WHAT! HIS OWN UNCLE?
IMPOSSIBLE!
IT IS DANGEROUS TO
SPREAD RUMOURS.



I HAVE PROOF. HERE IS
THE LETTER. MY
HUSBAND TOOK IT
FROM RAGHOBHA'S SOLDIERS -
ALMOST KILLING HIMSELF
IN THE SCUFFLE.



I AM LEAVING FOR
THE CORONATION DURBAR.
I CANNOT WASTE ANOTHER
MOMENT.



AT THE DURBAR HALL, RAGHUNATH RAO WAS ABOUT TO BE LED TO THE THRONE WHEN—

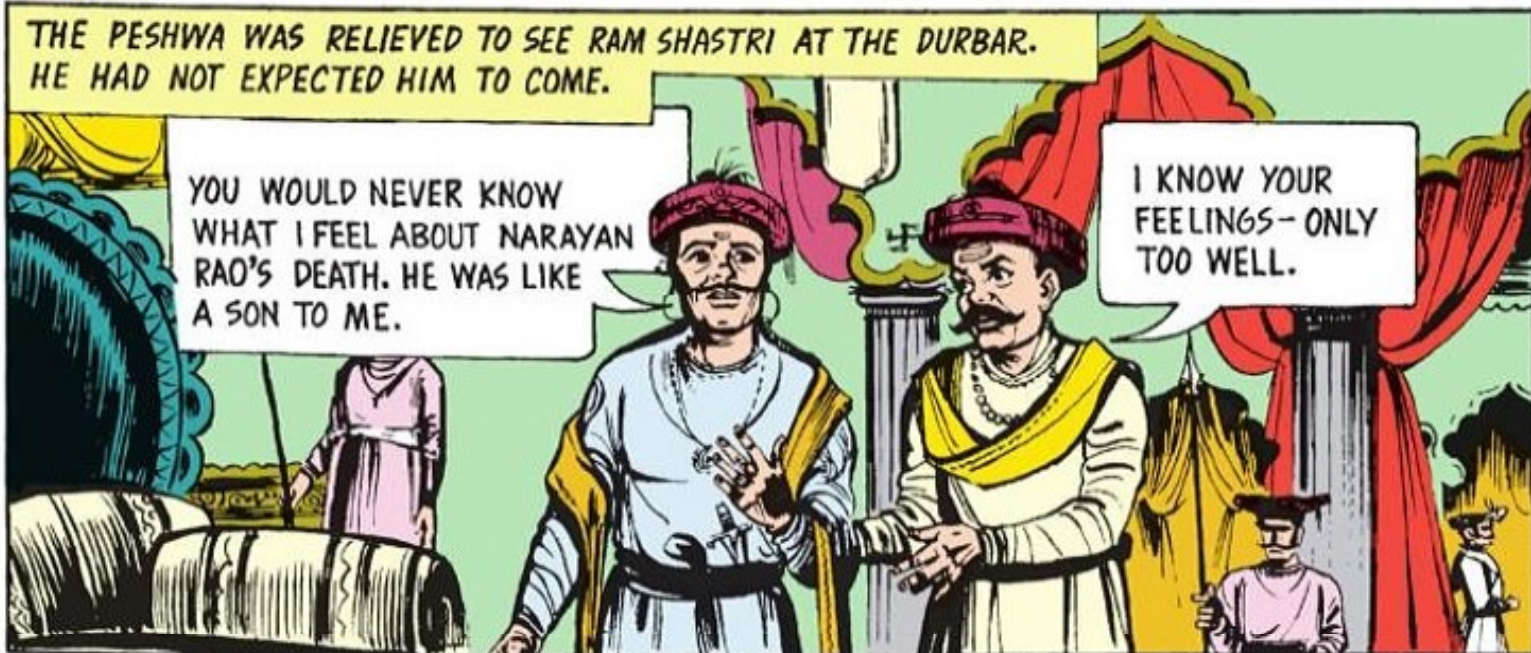


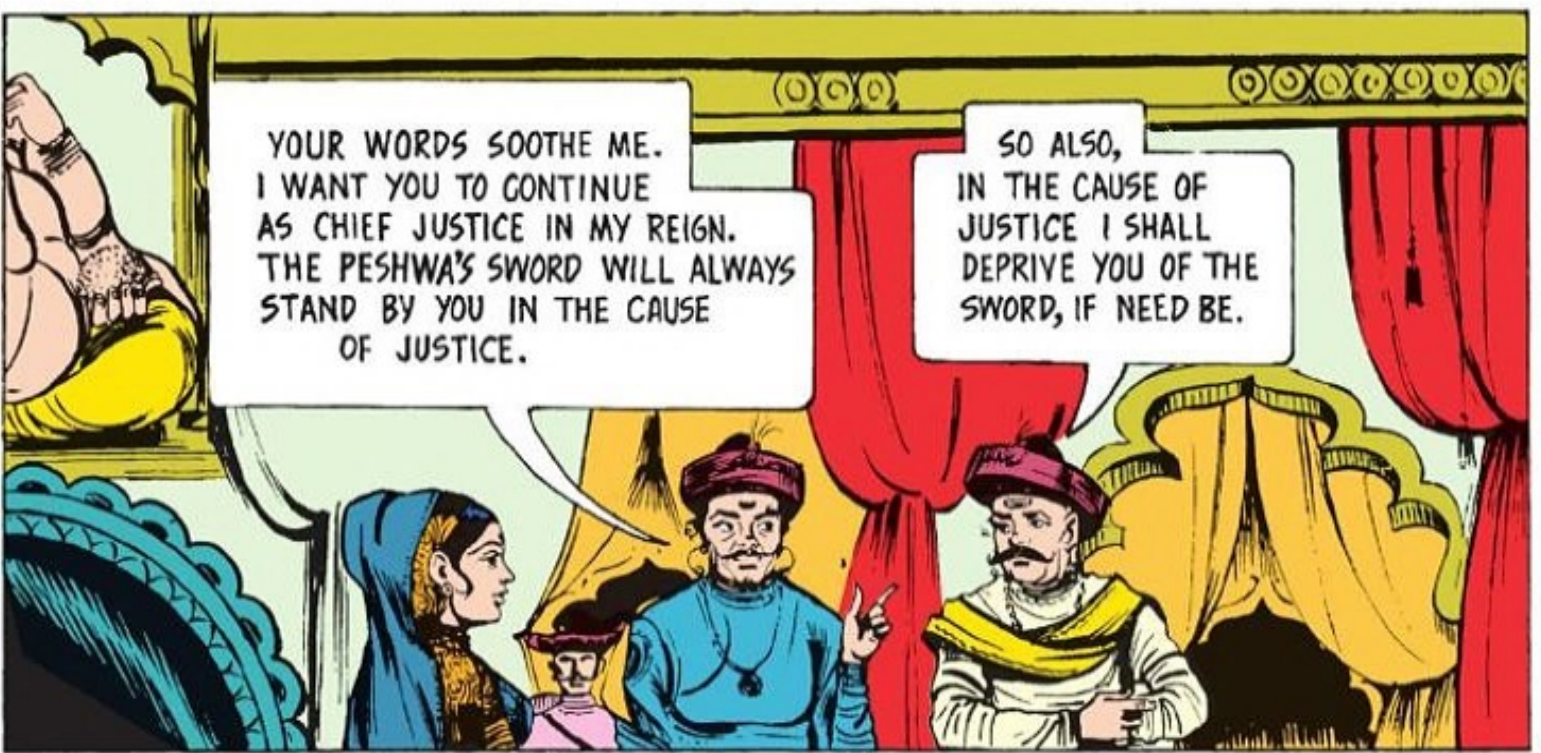
WAIT! AS CHIEF JUSTICE
IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO
LEAD THE PESHWA TO
THE THRONE.

THE PESHWA WAS RELIEVED TO SEE RAM SHASTRI AT THE DURBAR.
HE HAD NOT EXPECTED HIM TO COME.

YOU WOULD NEVER KNOW
WHAT I FEEL ABOUT NARAYAN
RAO'S DEATH. HE WAS LIKE
A SON TO ME.

I KNOW YOUR
FEELINGS— ONLY
TOO WELL.






YOUR WORDS SOOTHE ME.
I WANT YOU TO CONTINUE
AS CHIEF JUSTICE IN MY REIGN.
THE PESHWA'S SWORD WILL ALWAYS
STAND BY YOU IN THE CAUSE
OF JUSTICE.


SO ALSO,
IN THE CAUSE OF
JUSTICE I SHALL
DEPRIVE YOU OF THE
SWORD, IF NEED BE.

ANANDIBAI WAS IMPATIENT.




COME RAGHUBA.
THE THRONE WAITS
FOR YOU.

WHEN RAGHUNATH HESITATED —




WHY DO YOU HESITATE?
THE GREEN VELVET OF
THE VACANT THRONE IS
YET FREE OF THE RED STAINS
OF BLOOD.

BY NOW ANANDIBAI SENSED THAT ALL WAS NOT WELL.
SHE BECAME NERVOUS.



COME ON. HURRY.
SIT ON THE THRONE.



HOW CAN HE? A COWARD
LIKE HIM DARE NOT EVEN
TOUCH THE SACRED THRONE.

THE COURTIER'S WERE AGHAST.

RAM SHASTRI, BEWARE!
YOU ARE GOING TOO FAR.

HE IS A COWARD!
HE HAS HAD HIS OWN
NEPHEW MURDERED
TO USURP THE THRONE!

ANANDIBAI COULD NOT STAND THIS ANY LONGER.

THIS TRAITOR OPENLY
INSULTS THE PESHWA.
ISN'T THERE ONE
AMONG YOU WHO IS
MAN ENOUGH TO
SILENCE HIM?

NO, ANANDIBAI.
THIS PLACE IS BEREFT
OF MEN. OTHERWISE A
MURDERER WOULD NOT
ASCEND THE THRONE.

RAGHUNATH RAO WAS TERRIFIED.

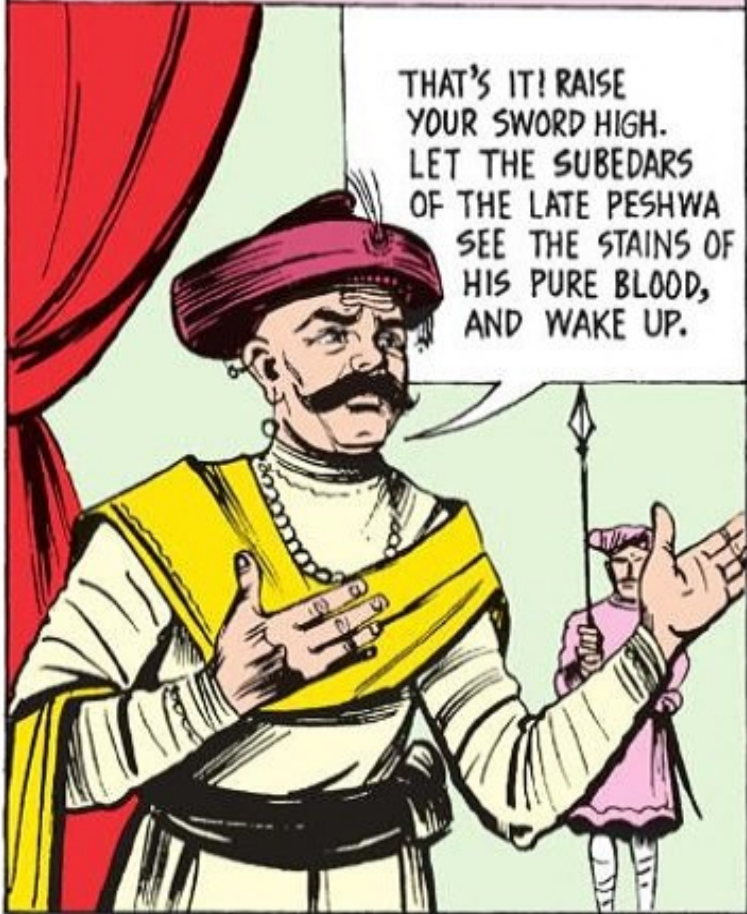
WHAT? I KILLED
NARAYAN RAO?
NEVER. IT WAS A...

JUST THEN RAGHOB'S SOLDIER RUSHED
TOWARDS RAM SHASTRI.

I SHALL SILENCE
YOU FOREVER,
BRAHMAN!

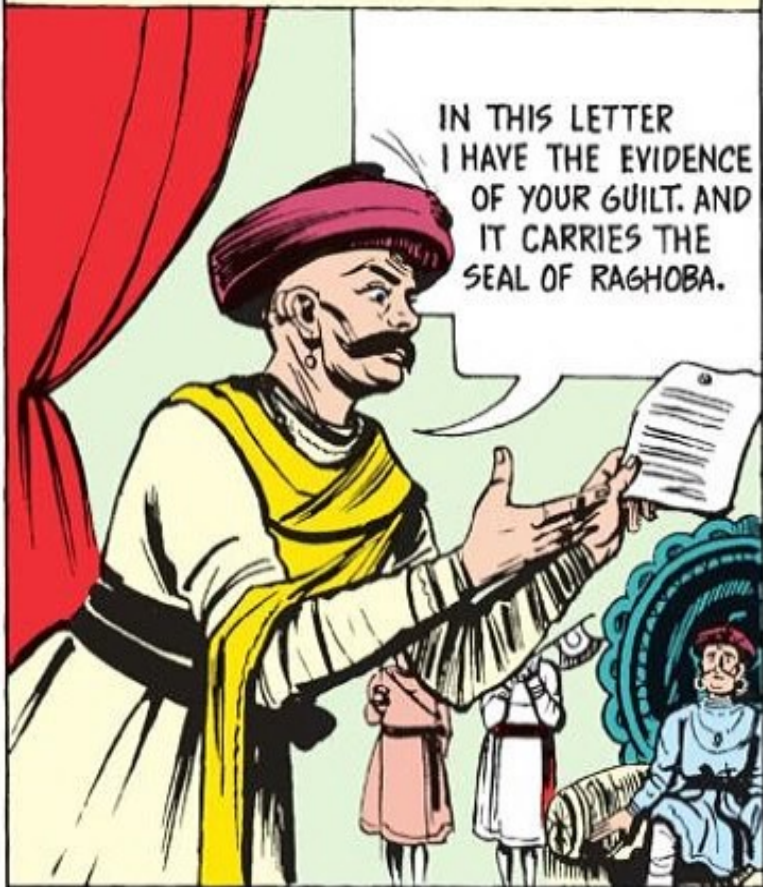
UNDAUNTED RAM SHASTRI STEPPED FORWARD.

THAT'S IT! RAISE
YOUR SWORD HIGH.
LET THE SUBEDARS
OF THE LATE PESHWA
SEE THE STAINS OF
HIS PURE BLOOD,
AND WAKE UP.




RAM SHASTRI PULLED OUT THE LETTER
FROM HIS CUMMERBUND.

IN THIS LETTER
I HAVE THE EVIDENCE
OF YOUR GUILT. AND
IT CARRIES THE
SEAL OF RAGHOBA.




ANANDIBAI TURNED PALE WHEN SHE SAW
THE LETTER. SHE TURNED TO THE SOLDIERS.

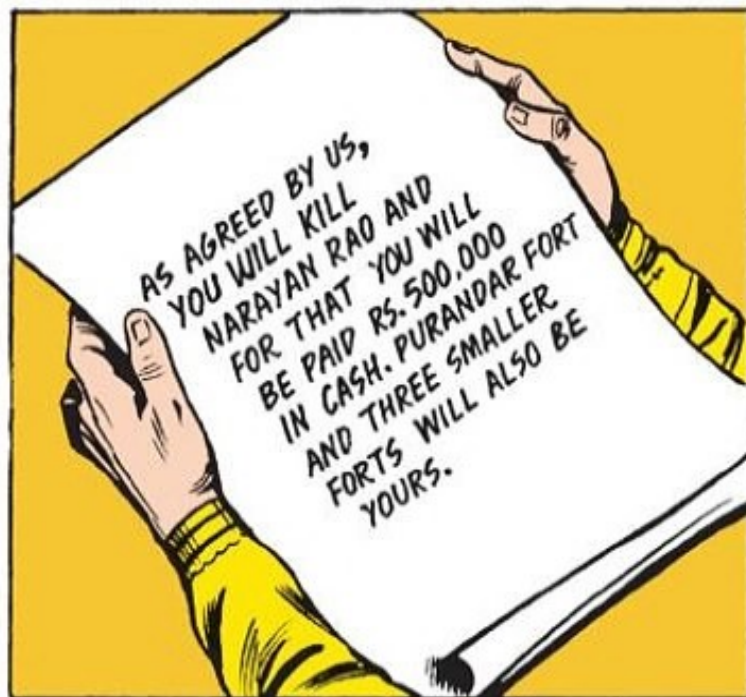
WHAT ARE YOU
WAITING FOR?
PUT HIM IN CHAINS.



AS THEY RUSHED FORWARD, TWO SUBEDARS
INTERVENED.

BEWARE SOLDIERS!
OUR SWORDS ARE
DRAWN IN THE
SERVICE OF JUSTICE.
SHASTRI BUA! WHAT DOES
THE LETTER SAY?



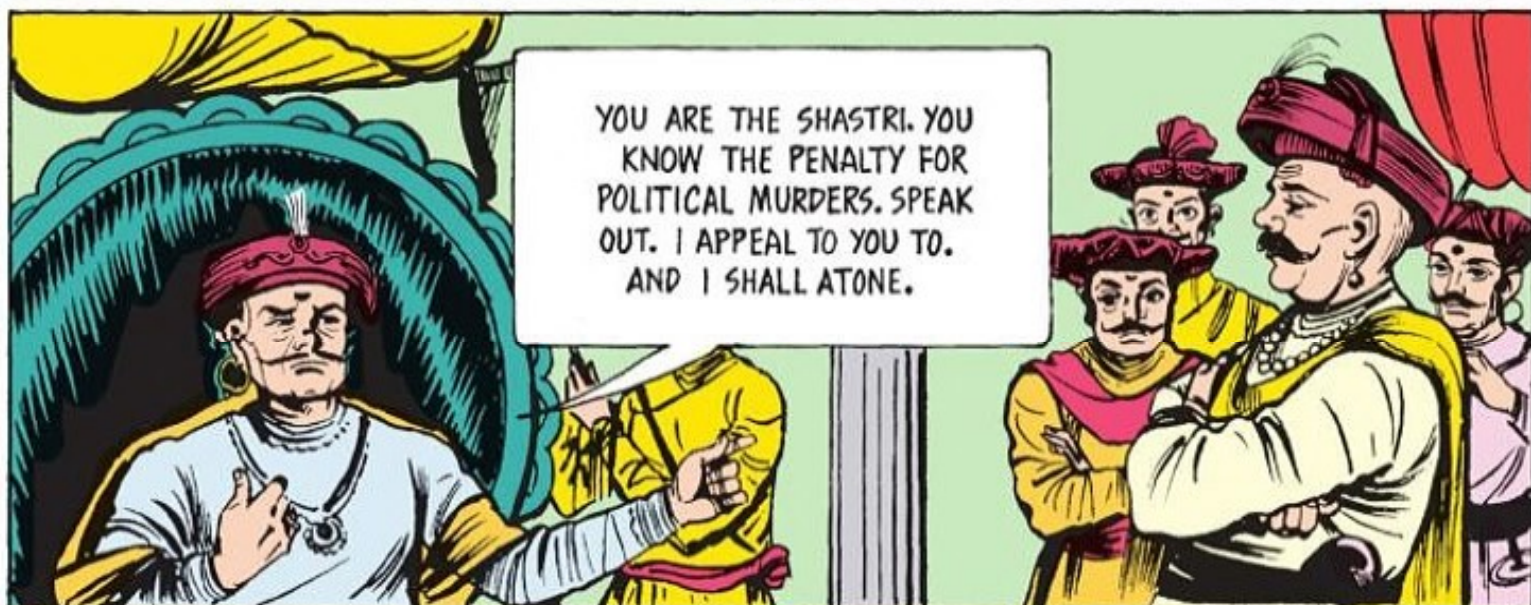


AS AGREED BY US,
YOU WILL KILL
NARAYAN RAO AND
FOR THAT YOU WILL
BE PAID RS. 500,000
IN CASH. PURANDAR FORT
AND THREE SMALLER
FORTS WILL ALSO BE
YOURS.



FOR A MOMENT RAGHOBA WAS TONGUE-TIED. THEN-

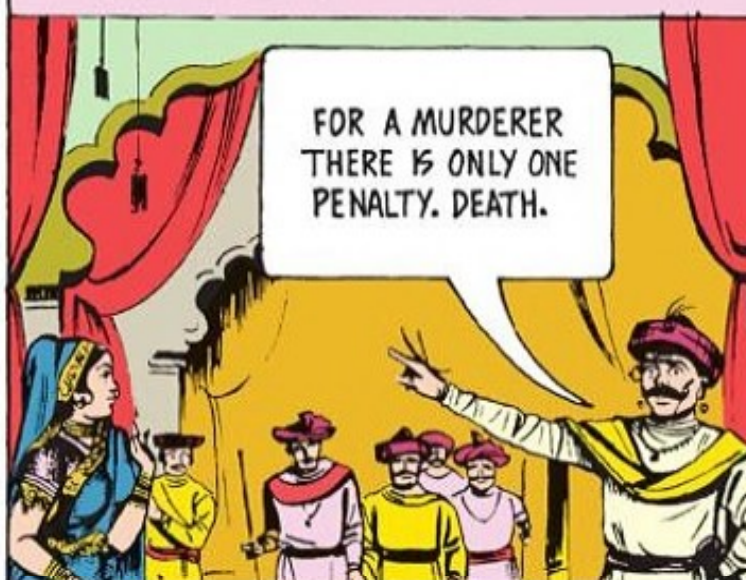
RAM SHASTRI,
NARAYAN RAO
WAS A VICTIM
OF
POLITICS.



YOU ARE THE SHASTRI. YOU
KNOW THE PENALTY FOR
POLITICAL MURDERS. SPEAK
OUT. I APPEAL TO YOU TO.
AND I SHALL ATONE.

THE COURTIER'S WERE IMPRESSED BY THE PESHWA'S WORDS, BUT NOT RAM SHASTRI.

FOR HIM THERE WAS NO COMPROMISE
WHERE JUSTICE WAS CONCERNED.



FOR A MURDERER
THERE IS ONLY ONE
PENALTY. DEATH.




SOLDIERS!
CHAIN THE TRAITOR.


BUT—



AHA! ONE STEP MORE
AND YOU WILL
BE DEAD!



SUBEDARS, IT IS FUTILE. AS
LONG AS THIS SINNER AND
MURDERER SITS ON THE THRONE
RAM SHASTRI SHALL BE AN ALIEN
IN POONA.



RAM SHASTRI, YOU HAVE
BEEN TRULY LOYAL TO
THE LATE PESHWA. THE
FIRST SALUTE OF THE DAY
SHALL BE TO YOU.

I AM HONoured.
I SHALL RETURN, BUT ONLY
WHEN THE THRONE SHAKES
OFF THE MURDERER!

TRUE TO HIS WORD RAM SHASTRI LEFT POONA, AND RETURNED ONLY
WHEN THE POSTHUMOUS SON OF NARAYAN RAO - SAWAI
MADHAV RAO - WAS BORN AND WAS MADE THE PESHWA. FROM THEN
ONWARDS HE WAS THE CHIEF JUSTICE TILL THE END OF HIS DAYS.

WHICH OF THE ACKs HAVE YOU STILL NOT READ?

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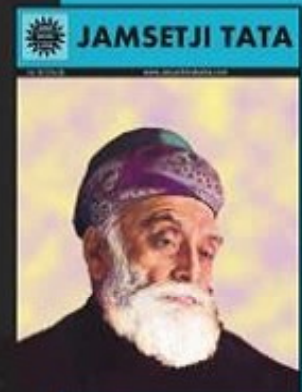
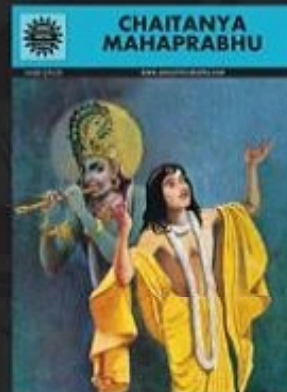
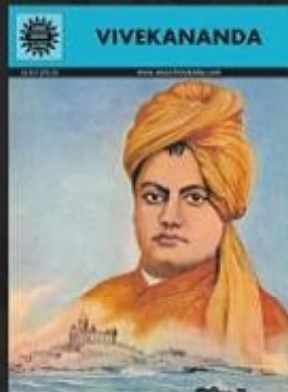
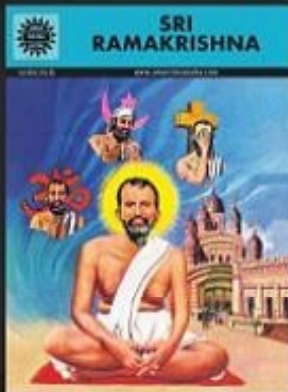


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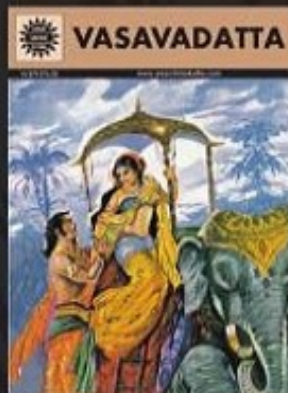
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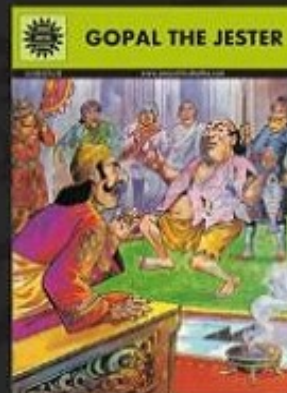
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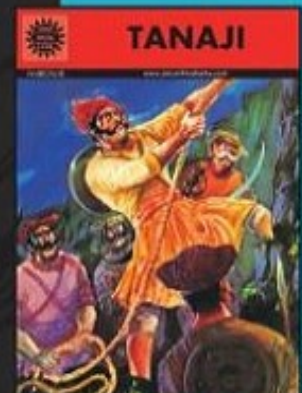
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